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VOLUME 7 ISSUE 5
MAY 1999



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fig. 1



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fig. 2



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fig. 3



urve Griffey

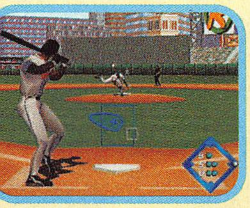


fig. a) WHAM!



fig. b) CRACK!

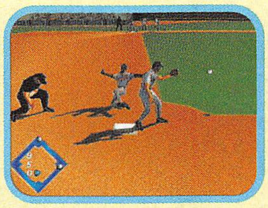


fig. c) SLIDE!



fig. d) SLAM!



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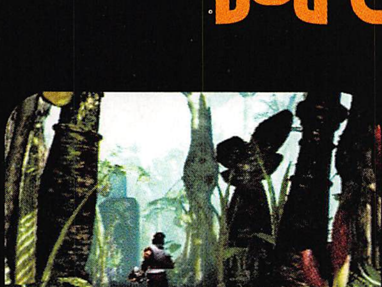
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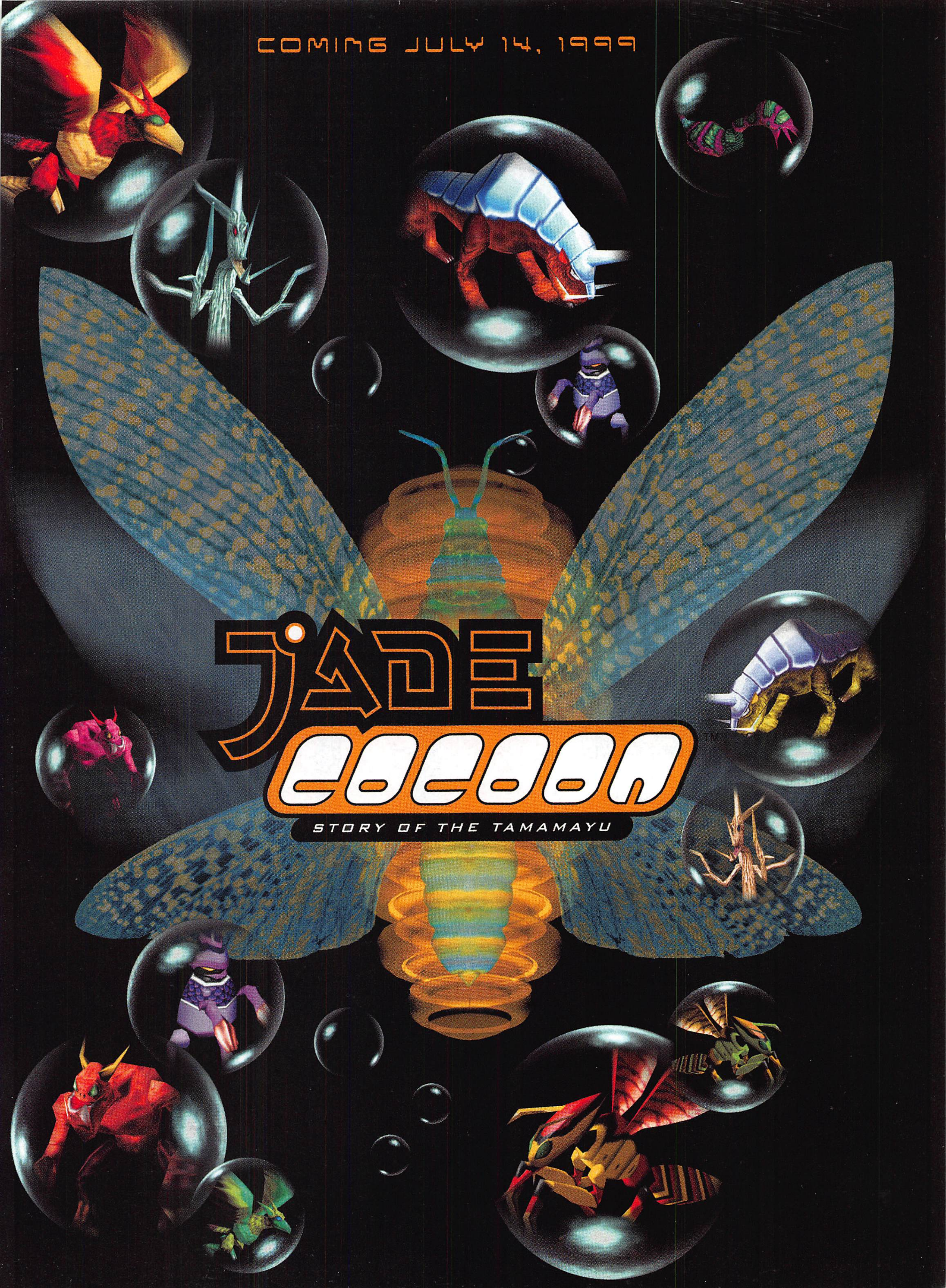


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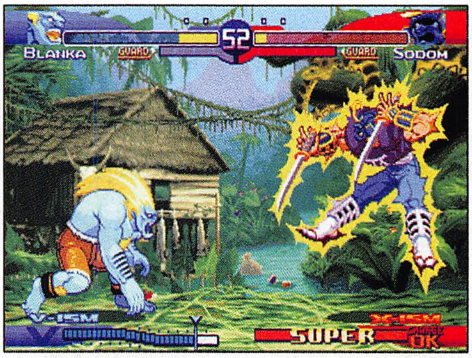
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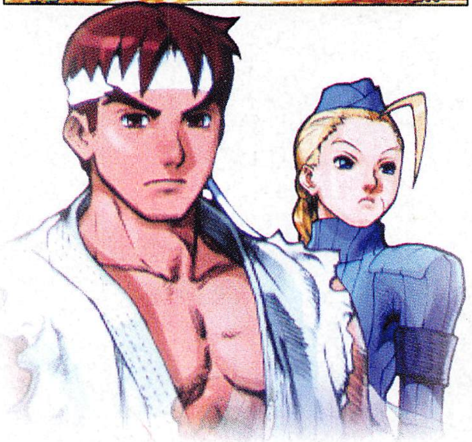


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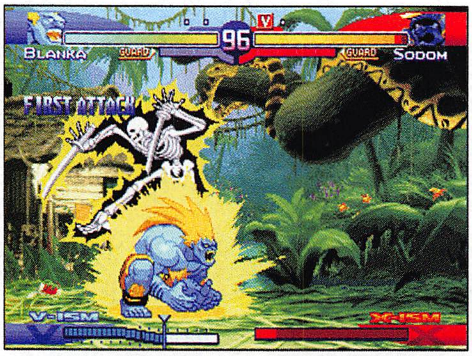
"Easily The Best Street Fighter Alpha Ever." – PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE

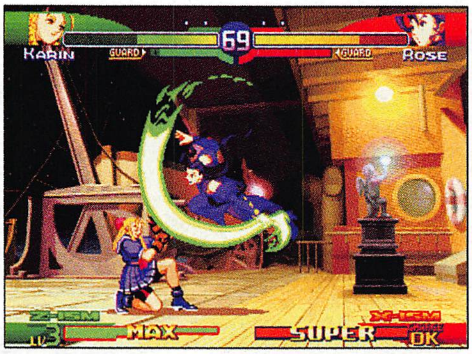


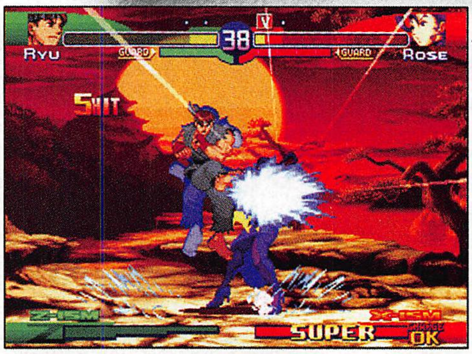


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Games are back. "A simple, eloquent phrase," stated one reader... I'm not so sure about that, but I thought it was appropriate in the recent *Sonic Adventure* Viewpoint. Turns out, not only was I correct in that statement (it happens... I was surprised too), but it seems that quite a few of you have been disgruntled with the state of games of late. After sifting through much mail on the matter, from gamers that term themselves "hard-core," down to what I'd term, "hard-core lite" (they don't buy many imports) the general consensus seems to be that people are starved for something that harks back to the glory days of 16-bit. Which brings me to the main point: generally speaking, gamers (not 'little Jimmy' or 'sports-playing college boys' but the real deal, i.e. *GameFan* readers) are looking for the 'next big thing,' and I think we may have it in Sega's Dreamcast.

> **"...the GF reader would be well served investing in a Dreamcast..."**

Sure, I'll get raked over the coals by any number of web acolytes and people 'in the know' at other gaming pubs (who are these guys... thinking they're so 'intelligent'... <grumble>), but after having blasted through *Sonic Adventure*, gunning down a legion of zombies in *House of the Dead 2*, pummeling a pack of pugilistic punching bags (my fellow eds) in *Power Stone* and *VF3tb* (*Marvel vs. Capcom* is next!), and looking down the road at a whole slew of 'I can't talk about them just yet' blasts from the past, I can safely say that the *GF* reader would be well served investing in a Dreamcast. And let me emphasize one point: This will **not** be another 32X or Sega CD (for the life of me, though, an add-on that sells a couple of million units can't really be considered a failure, can it?), mark my words. In fact, this is the machine that many, many fans hoped the Saturn would have been: a US-based enthusiast machine that **will** have the mass appeal necessary to make it viable against Nintendo and Sony.

So what exactly does all this mean? Basically, it means that the "college pukes" (as Reubus affectionately refers to them) will get all the sports games they can stand; little Jimmy will get every hyped-to-death, big-budget game mommy can manage to buy; and us, the hard-core gamer will get games from every genre known to man that we knew dearly and intimately during the 16-bit age. Games like *Sonic Adventure*, *Beyond Oasis*, *Ecco the Dolphin*, *Shinobi*, *Grandia*, *Chakan* (see next issue for the **exclusive** on the return of this undead hero) etc., as well as developers like Visual Concepts, Tecnosoft, Treasure, and SNK (some of the last bastions of hard-core gaming), who will breath some much-needed life into an industry that seems to thrive on sequel-based fodder.

Oh, and as for Sony's recent announcement of their PSY (the second-generation PlayStation), I'm going to make this statement once and then I'm not gonna dwell or harp on it (at least not till next month): this console DOES NOT exist in any form yet. As with any console intro, Sony showed a bunch of flashy, playable demos running on hardware that is nowhere near final. They played the 'steal Sega's thunder' game and played it **very** well. As for the doubters, all I have to say is 0.15 micron manufacturing process (do some research on this, and it should prove to be quite illuminating). While I'll be the first to admit that the 'games' look incredible, for the most part, it looks like more of the 'me too' drivel I've been playing on my PlayStation for the past two years. Here's to hoping the PSY doesn't turn into the gaming wasteland that the majority of the PSX' titles inhabit.

That about wraps up this month's Ed Zone. Tune in next month when I'll take on the whole of the Internet in a fight to the death over the immortal question: How many issues does *GameFan* consider a full-year's worth?

Editorial Director
Eric Mylonas

GameFan (ISSN#: 1092-7212) Volume 7 Issue 5 May 1999. Published monthly by Shinno Media Corp. 6301 DeSoto Avenue Unit E, Woodland Hills, CA 91367. One year subscription (12 issues) is $24.99. Foreign and Canada add $10 per year. Please remit in U.S. funds only. Please allow 60 days for your first issue. Periodical Postage Rates Paid at Los Angeles, CA and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send change of address form to: Shinno Media Corp. 6301 DeSoto Avenue Unit E, Woodland Hills, CA 91367.

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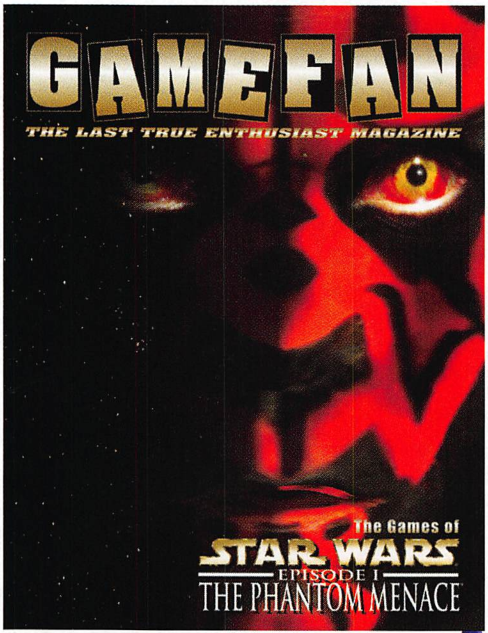
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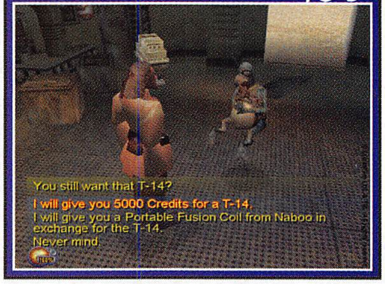
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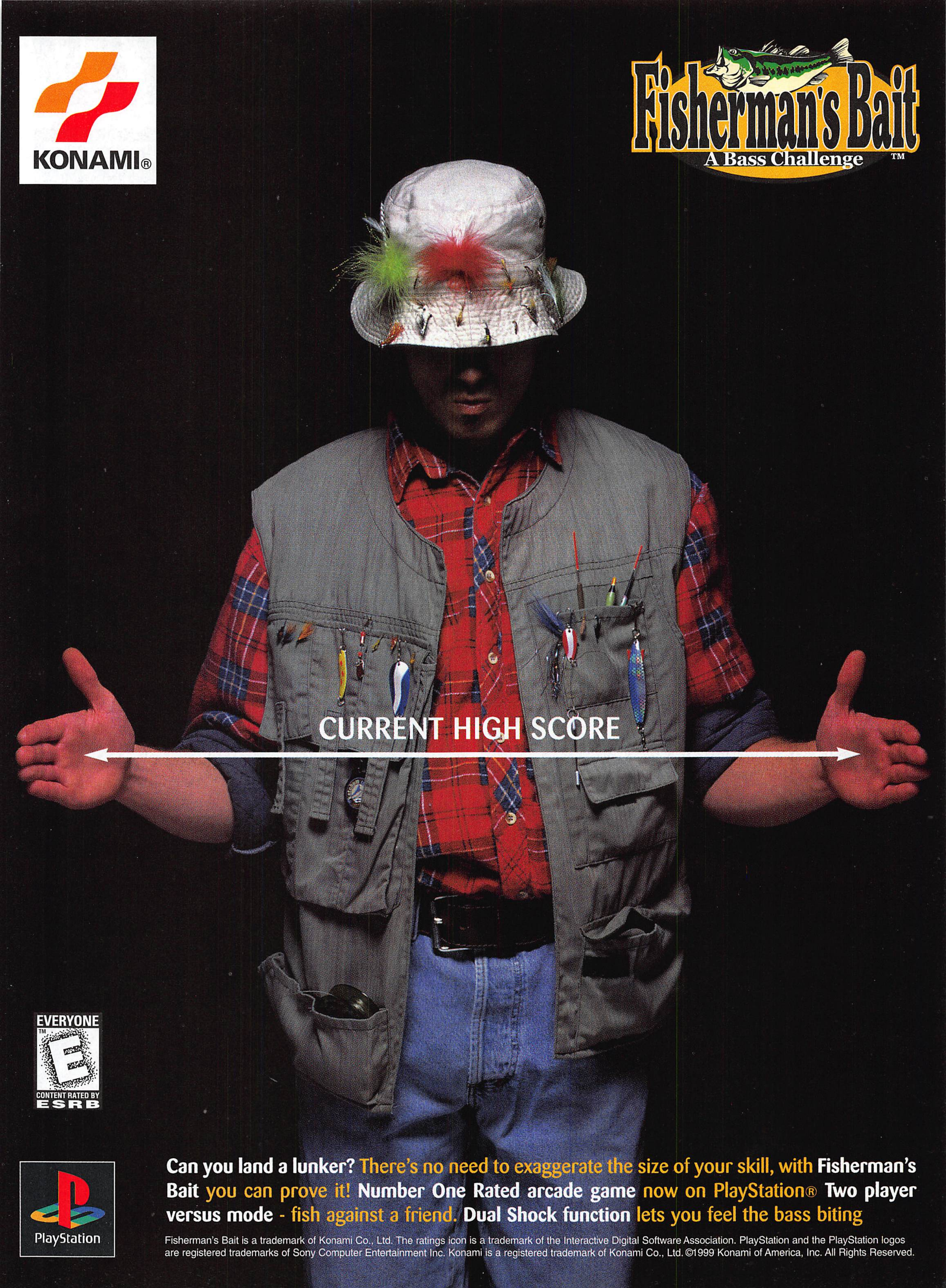








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TOP TEN MOST WANTED

May 1999

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READER'S TOP TEN

1) *ZELDA: OOT* - N64
2) *TUROK 2: SOE* - N64
3) *SYPHON FILTER* - PS
4) *XENOGEARS* - PS
5) *METAL GEAR SOLID* - PS
6) *CASTLEVANIA* - N64
7) *SILENT HILL* - PS
8) *TEKKEN 3* - PS
9) *GOLDENEYE* - N64
10) *MARIO PARTY* - N64

READER'S MOST WANTED

1) *FINAL FANTASY VIII* - PS
2) *SHEN MUE* - DC
3) *SUIKODEN II* - PS
4) *METROID 64* - N64
5) *PERFECT DARK* - N64
6) *SONIC ADVENTURE* - DC
7) *RE: CODE VERONICA* - DC
8) *DINO CRISIS* - PS
9) *RESIDENT EVIL 64* - N64
10) *HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2* - DC

FINAL FANTASY VIII



GAMEFAN EDITORS' TOP TEN

*IMPORT TITLE



1) *METAL SLUG X* - NEOGEO
2) *ZOMBIE REVENGE* - ARCADE
3) *CRAZY TAXI* - ARCADE
4) *GIGA WING* - ARCADE
5) *HERZOG ZWEI* - GENESIS
6) *SHADOWGATE 64* - N64
7) *BEYOND OASIS* - GENESIS
8) *PUYO PUYON* - DC
9) *MARVEL VS. CAPCOM* - DC
10) *SONIC ADVENTURE* - DC



1) *VIRTUAL ON 2* - ARCADE
2) *ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON* - PC
3) *SYPHON FILTER* - PS
4) *LAST BLADE 2* - ARCADE
5) *MARVEL VS. CAPCOM* - DC
6) *CRAZY TAXI* - ARCADE
7) *D & D COLLECTION** - SATURN
8) *SF ALPHA 3* - PS
9) *TALES OF PHANTASIA** - PS
10) *METAL GEAR SOLID* - PS



1) *SILENT HILL* - PS
2) *PUYO PUYON* - DC
3) *POWERSTONE* - DC
4) *SNOWBOARD KIDS 2* - N64
5) *HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2* - DC
6) *ASUKA 120% S* - SATURN
7) *METAL GEAR SOLID* - PS
8) *SAM. SHODOWN 2* - NEOGEO
9) *DESTREGA* - PS
10) *PITFALL 2* - ARCADE



1) *ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON* - PC
2) *FINAL FANTASY VII** - PS
3) *CHOCOBO RACING** - PS
4) *FF COLLECTION** - PS
5) *UM JAMMER LAMMY** - PS
6) *MONSTER FARM 2** - PS
7) *QUAKE II* - PC
8) *SHADOWGATE 64* - N64
9) *BUST-A-MOVE 4* - PS
10) *MANIAC MANSION* - C64



1) *HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2* - DC
2) *HOUSE OF THE DEAD* - ARCADE
3) *VIRTUAL ON 2* - ARCADE
4) *D & D COLLECTION** - SATURN
5) *RIDGE RACER R4* - PS
6) *MARVEL VS. CAPCOM* - DC
7) *QUAKE II* - PC
8) *SF ZERO 3* - PS
9) *SEGA RALLY 2* - DC
10) *POWERSTONE* - DC



1) *QUAKE II* - PC
2) *ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON* - PC
3) *SONIC ADVENTURE* - DC
4) *BASEBALL 2000* - PS
5) *LAST BLADE 2* - ARCADE
6) *BUST-A-MOVE 4* - PS
7) *CIV.: CALL TO POWER* - PC
8) *MONSTER FARM 2** - PS
9) *NHL 99* - PS
10) *ALL-STAR BASEBALL* - N64

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DEVELOPER'S TOP TEN

THIS MONTH'S GUEST:
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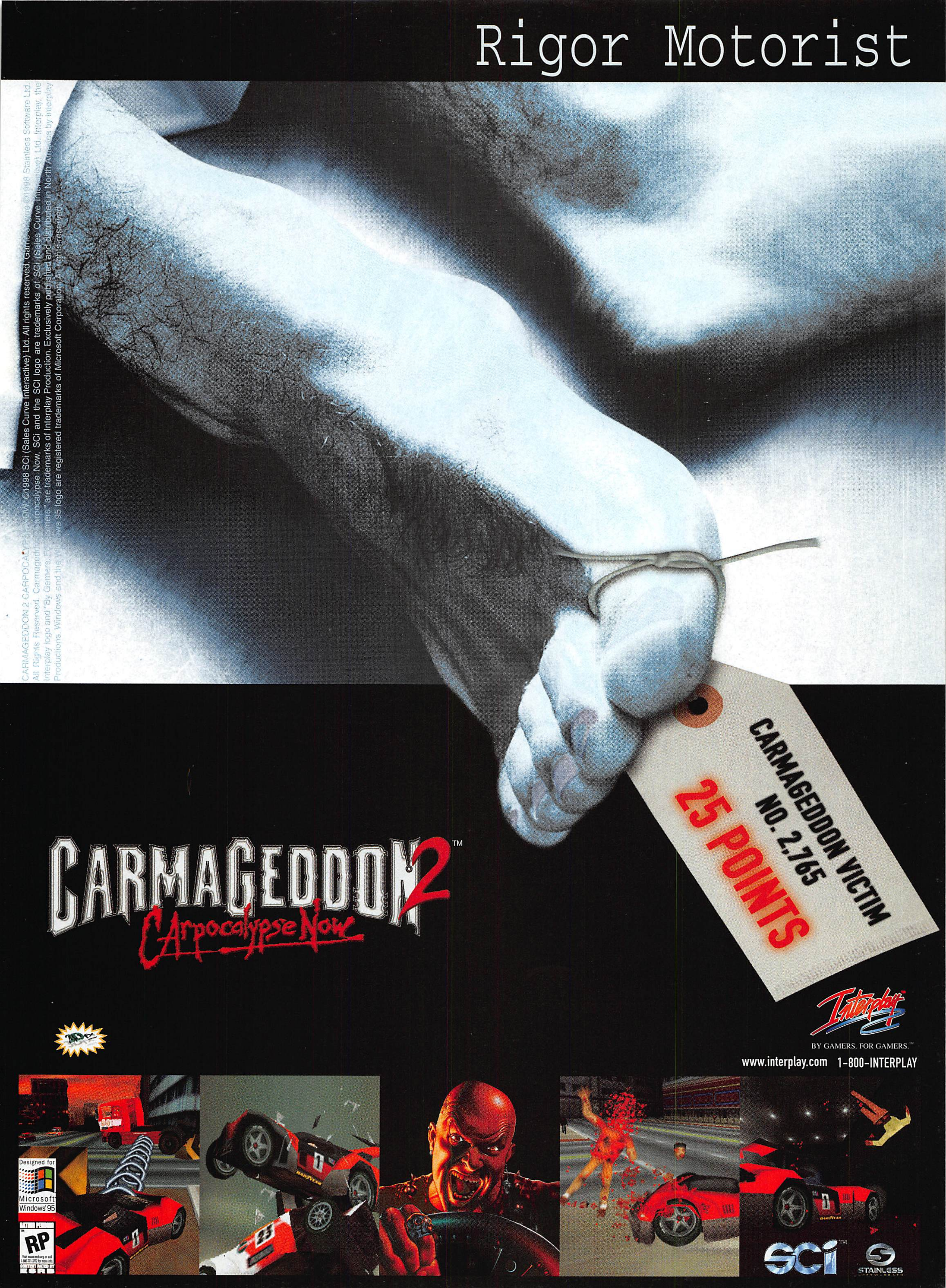
1) *SONIC & KNUCKLES* - GENESIS
2) *TOMB RAIDER* - PS
3) *QUAKE II* - PC
4) *RESIDENT EVIL* - PS
5) *WARCRAFT* - PC
6) *LEGEND OF ZELDA* - NES
7) *SUPER MARIO 3* - NES
8) *GRAN TURISMO* - PS
9) *GAUNTLET* - ARCADE
10) *FINAL FANTASY* - SERIES

SONIC & KNUCKLES

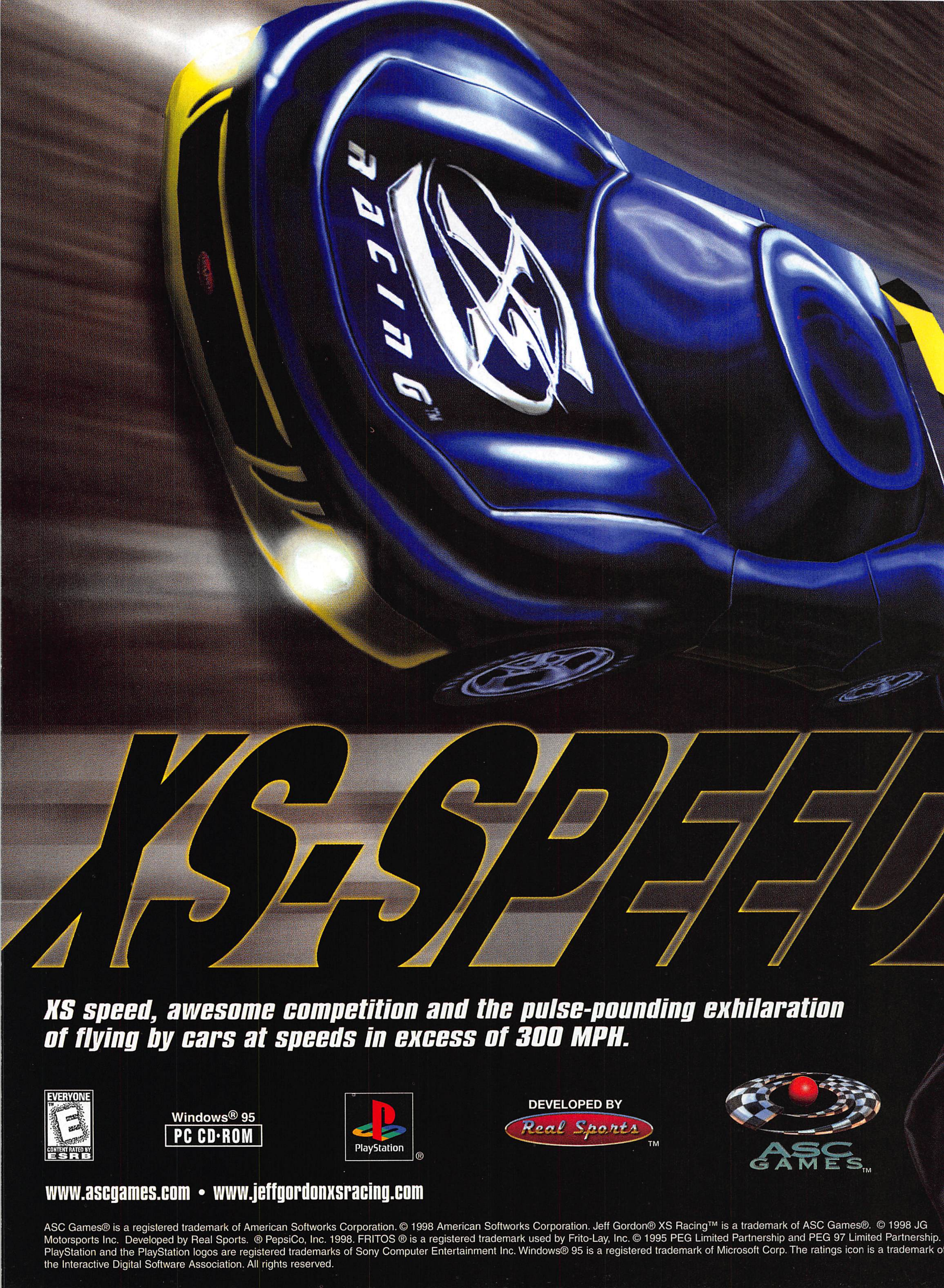
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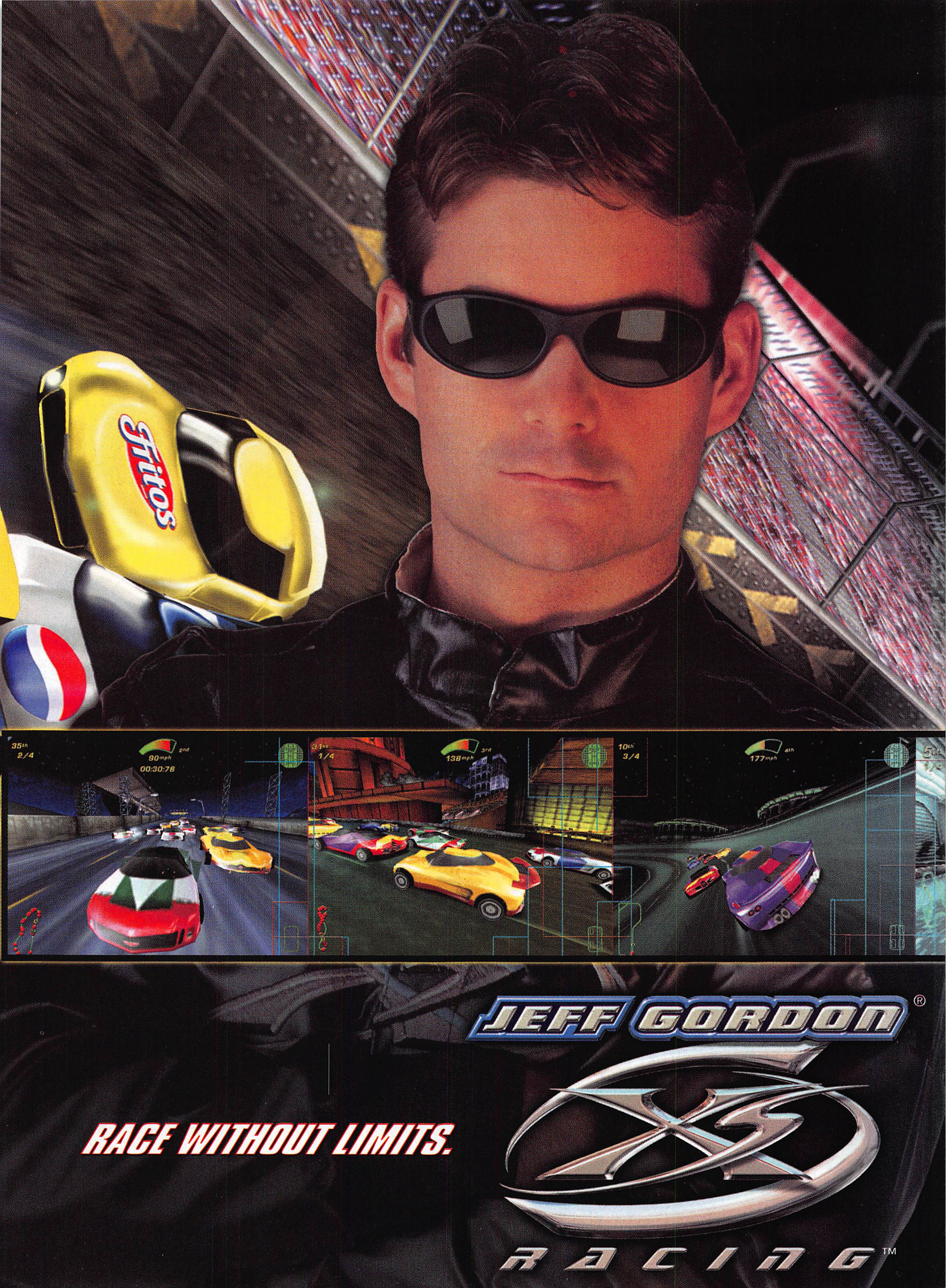


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GameFan Hot Info!

PlayStation 2 Announced!



After years of speculation and extremely hush-hush behavior on Sony Computer Entertainment's part, the moment we've all been waiting for has arrived. Let the world beware, for the PlayStation 2 (not the official name) has been announced. And we've got all the details!

The plans for the new PlayStation are pretty unique. In development for over two years, it's Sony's intention from the start to create a 'new type' of home entertainment. When Sega designed their Dreamcast, their model for inspiration was the Personal Computer (PC) market. The DC incorporates a built-in modem, a Windows operating system, and of course the much-touted Power VR accelerator board.

But Sony's model is completely different. Very early on, they decided to create new technology that allowed a mixture of entertainment and powerful technology at an affordable price. Not a set-top box (as some have suggested), but an entertainment system unlike any other before... It's Sony's intention to create a mass-market entertainment unit that can outperform anything else on the market and provide the very highest quality interactive experience. With the next-generation PlayStation hardware, they seem well on their way.



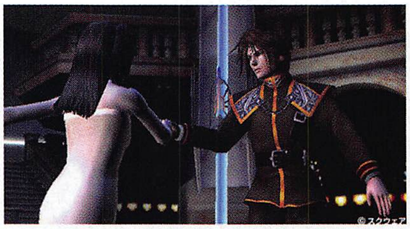






Rage Racer Type 5 & Gran Turismo 3!

Well maybe not, but what they also showed were these racing demos running in real-time from SoftImage. (Left Two): Ridge Racer mock-up. (Right): Gran Turismo demo.



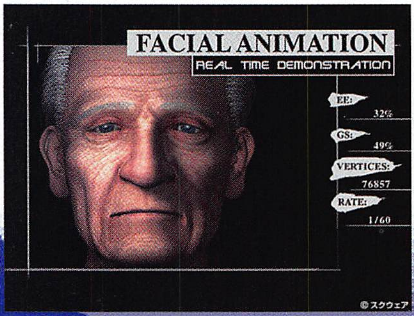


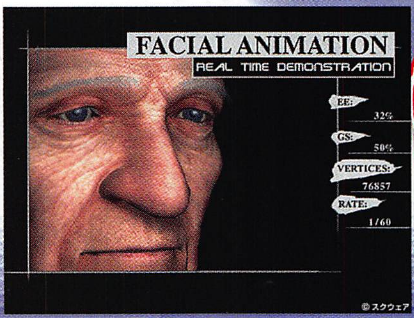


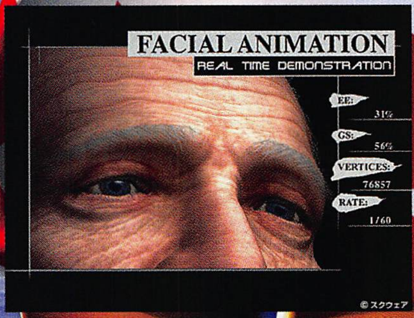
Final Fantasy VIII Remix?!

To show-off the hardware, Sony had a demo of these two lovebirds (Squall and Rinoa) dancing the night away in a ballroom. This was, no doubt, to show off yet even more of the hardware engine.

Below, Square shows their 'face' model that is already making an appearance in the upcoming *Final Fantasy* movie. Notice the amount of detail in the character's face... Scary!







Sony & Toshiba: The New Dream Team

Sony has teamed up with Toshiba to create the next-generation PlayStation hardware, which uses the 'Emotion Engine.' The EE is the world's first *true* 128-bit CPU (as opposed to the DC's 'pseudo-128-bit' SH2 CPU, which in reality is actually only 64-bit). Working in tandem with the new Graphics Synthesizer, the PS2 will be at *least* 20x more powerful than the latest PC hardware (toasting the new Pentium 3), and is reported to be at *least* twice as powerful as the top Silicon Graphics Workstation.

Tally it up, and the new machine can draw an incredible 75 MILLION polygons per second, which is far beyond anything even remotely possible on any other system. When all effects are turned on (including Z-buffering, textures, lighting and transparency effects), the new PS can maintain a sustained 20 million polygons per second. What this means in plain English is this:

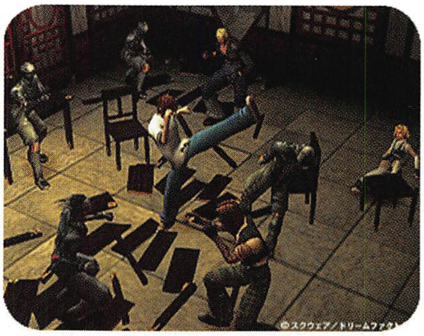
Games will look better than ever. In fact, they'll look like rendered movies. In technology demos presented by Sony, featuring popular Namco, Square, and Sony characters, this was very apparent. Introduced by the (very) popular *Ridge Racer* girl seductively blowing kisses, the PS2 real-time rendering left everyone who witnessed it in awe. In particular, the *Tekken* demo, which showed off the system's ability to draw those millions of polygons, displayed over 30 characters onscreen at the same time (the extra characters were background groupies, cheering on the fight). The ballroom scene from *Final Fantasy 8* was also shown, playing in real-time on the new hardware. Crash made an appearance, being followed by dozens of happy penguins.






Fighting Frenzies!

Sure, and what system wouldn't be complete without a fighting game? That's right! Namco has already begun work on an upcoming *Tekken* game for the PS 2! (Above): Paul Phoenix smacks down Jin Kazama in a 'street' fight.



SQUARE was also flexing their fighting game muscle in a game that had players duking it out on different planes. (Left and Below): Leap down from the second floor and deliver an elbow to your enemy! Furniture can also be thrown to wound your enemies!




MPEG Decoding

It's true that the new PlayStation hardware will utilize MPEG2 decompression, as well as a DVD-ROM drive, but what isn't known at this time is whether or not that will allow for standard DVD movies. Sony states that while it's functional for the new PS to play these movies, any such addition will be merely an extra option. Their intent was not to create a multimedia machine (a point they highly stress), but rather a new-type of entertainment for the home.

While DVD movies are certainly plausible, the reason for using the MPEG decompression system is to allow the new PS CPU's (Emotion Engine, Graphics Synthesizer) to decompress MPEG textures 'on-the-fly.' What this means is that 3D worlds will now be vastly improved over anything currently seen... instantly. New methods of bandwidth transfer (too complicated to explain here) will allow for instantaneous transfer of data. The result will be unparalleled graphics displays, rivaling (if not exceeding) current motion pictures. What this means is that games won't only look as good as current CG movies, but they might actually look better. It's true!

Backward Compatibility — More Helpful Than You Thought

With their decision to include backward compatibility, it seems that Sony acknowledges the fact that there are currently 50+ million original PlayStation units around the world. This type of hardware acceptance exceeded everyone's expectations.

First, people who have yet to buy the original PlayStation need not fear that old software will become obsolete when the new system launches. Secondly, all the nifty gadgets/peripherals that current PS owners purchased (namely, the Dual Shock, memory cards, and the upcoming PocketStation) will also be compatible with the new PS hardware.

But more than any other reason, the decision to include backwards compatibility wasn't so much to please the current user base as it was to help create a new market of PlayStation software. Sony thinks that current PS technology will be around for years to come, and by offering full compatibility on one system, it helps ensure that dreams come true.



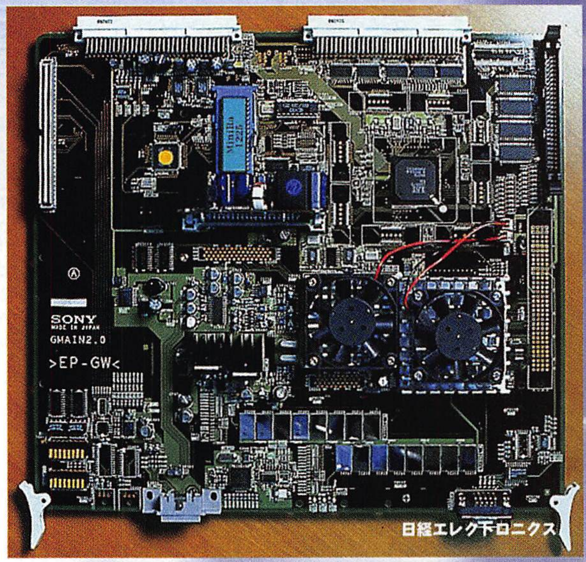
Internet Unsure

Again breaking away from the standard PC/Dreamcast mold, Sony has not announced any type of modem to be included with the system from the get-go. Their line of reasoning is that with the online communications market currently changing constantly, to announce a modem/communications unit at this time would almost guarantee it to become obsolete by the time the system is released. However, they did assure that such connectivity is in the works in the near future. The new PS hardware features many inputs (namely the new USB sockets), which will allow an unlimited amount of connectivity usage later.

Sony also announced plans to create a new company, based in Nagasaki, which will be responsible for manufacturing the Graphics Synthesizer. Toshiba will help manufacture the Emotion Engine in their Tokyo-based plants. Sony doesn't foresee any manufacturing problems, such as Sega's Dreamcast shortage last year.

Tech-Heads: PS2 Specs for You

CPU Core	128-bit RISC
Clock Frequency	300 MHz
Memory Bandwidth	3.2 GigaFlops/sec
Floating Point Performance	6.2 GigaFlops/sec
GS Core	Parallel Rendering Processor with embedded DRAM
Clock Frequency	150 MHz
No. of Pixel Engines	16 (in Parallel)
Embedded DRAM	4 MB of multi-port DRAM (Synced at 150mhz)
Total Memory Bandwidth	48 gigabytes per second
Display Color Depth	32-bit (RGBA: 8 bits each)
Z-Buffering	32-bit
Rendering Functions	Texture Mapping, Bump Mapping Fogging, Alpha Blending Bi- and Tri-Linear Filtering MIPMAP, Anti-Aliasing Multi-pass Rendering
Ram Specs	
Main RAM	32-megs
Graphic RAM	4-megs Embedded
Sound RAM	2-megs sound RAM
Rendering Performance	
Pixel Fill Rate	2.4 giga pixels per second
Particle Draw Rate	150 million/sec
Polygon Drawing Rate	75 million/sec (small polygon) 50 million/sec (48 pixel quad with Z and A) 30 million/sec (50 pixel triangle with Z and A) 25 million/sec (48 pixel quad with Z, A, and T)
Sprite Drawing Rate	18.75 million (8x8 pixels)



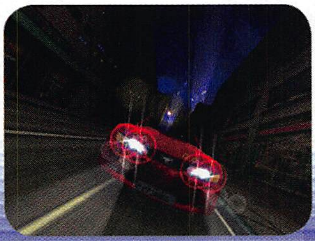
Notice the dual fans! I guess Sony is not making the same mistake (overheating) again. With all of the money Sony is putting behind the PS2, hardware developers from three teams got together and brainstormed their ideas and came up with this board.

MSR



The more we see of Metropolis Street Racer, the more our anticipation builds for what is sure to be one of the most impressive racing titles to ever hit the streets.

Bizarre Creations has logged some serious hours making sure that they have some of the most authentic tracks ever created. Metropolis Street Racer will feature courses based in actual cities from around the world, including Tokyo, London, and San Francisco. Bizarre went trouping around, gathering over 30,000 photographs and taking over 30 hours of footage for the 6+ square miles that have actually been modeled into the game.



PlayStation 2 Support Growing

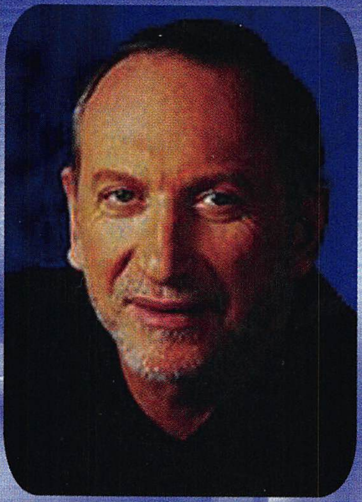
While rumored launch dates of the PlayStation 2 range from December of '99 till the very end of the year 2000, one thing that remains certain is the growing number of third party supporters.

One of the biggest third party developers is Square, who has demonstrated various software demos running on next generation PlayStation 2 hardware. Such demos included a revamped version of the ballroom CG scene in Final Fantasy VIII in hi-res., as well as an exciting demo of a fighting game done by the Square development team Dreamfactory (who developed Tobal 2). There's also an unnamed racing title is in the works by Square's development team Escape, developers of Ehrgeiz on the PlayStation.

Another third party powerhouse is Namco, and while no titles have been announced yet, it's a safe bet that a Ridge Racer game is in the works. Namco has demonstrated the PSY's power with demos of the Ridge Racer girl, Reiko Nagase, showing off her virtual beauty, as well as a demo of a Tekken-esque fighter. However, Namco has commented that their first PSY title will be formatted in the traditional CD-ROM format rather than the custom DVD-ROM format. According to Namco, this will allow for an easier port to the PlayStation, in case the PlayStation 2 is delayed.

Psygnosis is another company that has jumped aboard the good ship PSY. While development for PSY is being held off until Colony Wars 3 is released, Psygnosis plans to feature a Colony Wars game on the PSY. Can we also say Wipeout for the PlayStation 2?

The following is an unofficial list of 3rd parties who're developing for PS2: Arika, Asmik Entertainment, Atlus, Climax (UK) Artdink, Banpresto, Capcom, Enix, Game Arts, Human, Koei, Konami, Namco, Psygnosis, Square, Sony Music Entertainment (SME), and Takara.



Bernie Stolar
President Sega of America

Stolar Talks DC Strategy

After the bombshell announcement of Sony's PlayStation 2, many wondered how Sega would react. In a conference held over the phone in early March, Bernie Stolar (President of SOA) announced preliminary plans to launch their new system to the US market.

The system will retail for less than $200, he hinted during the conference, which is an ideal price point for game systems in the US. Sega learned long ago that most people are unwilling to pay anything over the magical $200 price limit. Fifteen titles are expected to be available at launch, with an estimated 30 more by Christmas. This type of software support is crucial in Sega's plan to re-establish themselves in the U.S. market, as the Saturn suffered greatly from a lack of third-party support in the US.

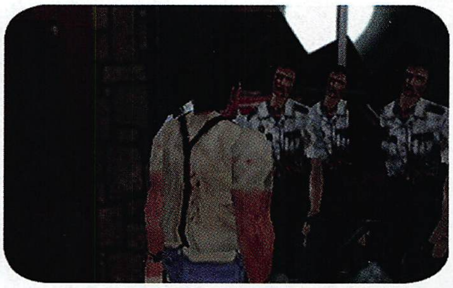
"Dreamcast will have DVD, but only when the time is right." said Stolar. While not the bombshell it could have been, Bernie did acknowledge that the DC's upgradeability will make watching DVD movies in the future possible.

Stolar did slightly acknowledge the PlayStation 2 announcement, but went on to remind everyone that the new system is at least a year away. The DC will be in stores this year, with dozens of titles to play. He also said that the technology that Sony is demonstrating will be extremely expensive, and to him it's obvious "that they are getting out of the average consumer market." It must be noted that during the PS2 debut, Sony had no information regarding price, system name, or software announcements. Sega's banking the farm on the Dreamcast, so it's only natural that they should feel threatened.

Large retail game stores (namely Babbages, EB, and Software Etc.) are already taking pre-orders for the Dreamcast (Software Etc. even has playable Japanese units in store). Stolar went on to say that the demand for the DC is already extremely high, with nearly 20,000 pre-orders taken as of March '99. Only time will tell if the once proud and powerful Sega is able to once again enter the savage game marketplace that they helped create.







Resident Evil for N64!

Capcom has confirmed that its blockbuster hit, Resident Evil 2, will be launched this fall for the Nintendo 64! Angel Studios, known for such titles as Ken Griffey Jr. Baseball, will be doing the honors for Capcom on this port.

The Nintendo 64 version will include a number of enhancements including improved game graphics, no load times, lightning-quick game play, and hidden costumes. Exclusive to the Nintendo 64 version, is a customized feature that allows players to adjust the intensity of the game. Now players can change the color of enemies' blood and adjust the level graphic content.







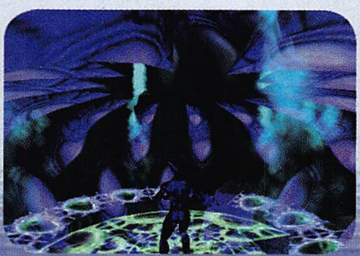
MDK 2

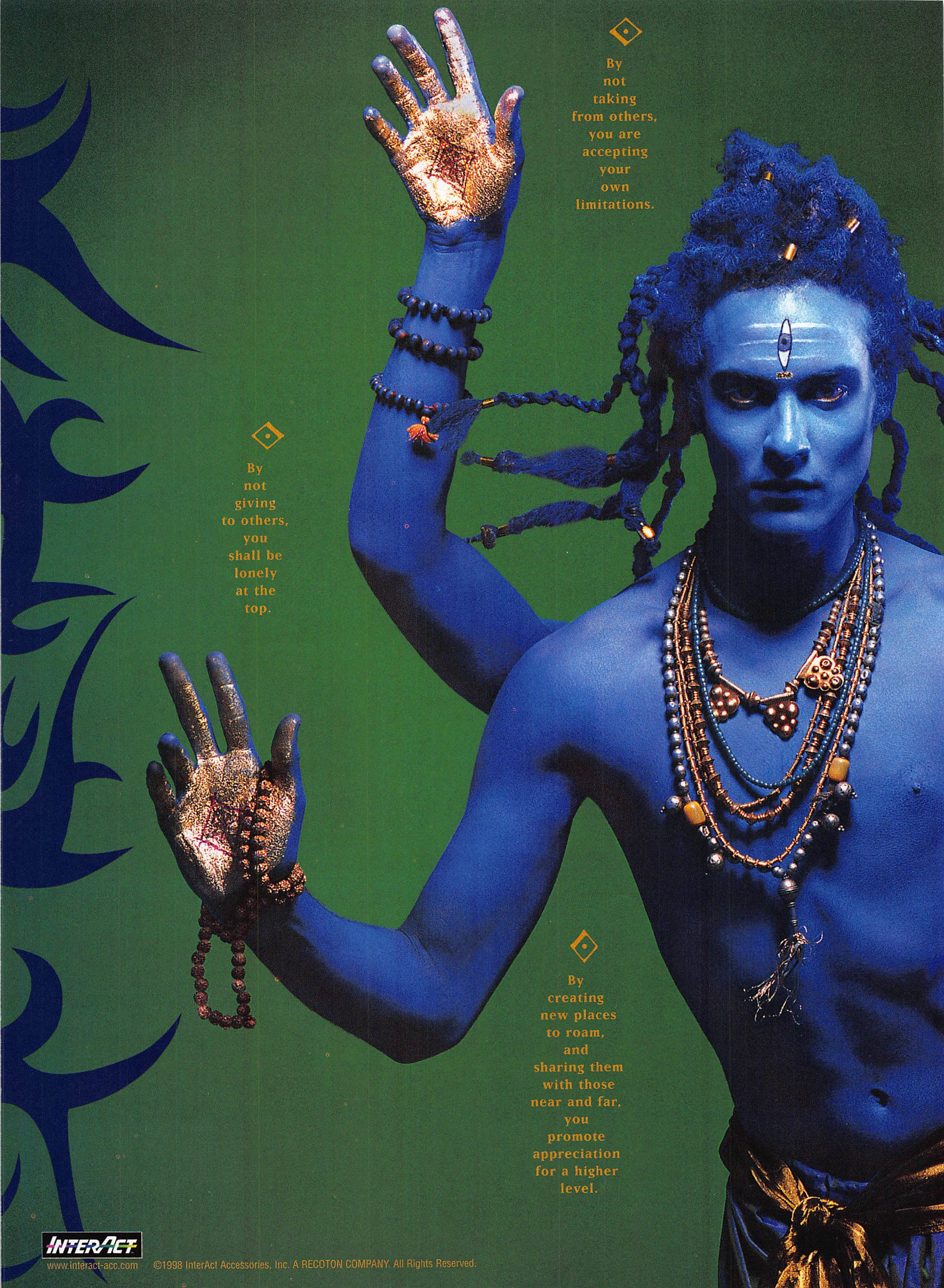
Bioware is developing MDK2 simultaneously for the Dreamcast and the PC, and is currently slating the game for release with the US Dreamcast launch in September.

The current MDK2 plans call for 9 levels, and within these levels, Bioware is planning to have over 20 completely unique enemies that you'll have to face. Also, current plans are calling for three different player characters, Max, Dr Hawkins and Kurt. Levels and items will change based on which character is being used.





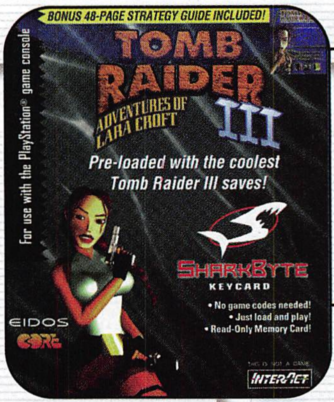



By
not
taking
from others,
you are
accepting
your
own
limitations.
By
not
giving
to others,
you
shall be
lonely
at the
top.
By
creating
new places
to roam,
and
sharing them
with those
near and far,
you
promote
appreciation
for a higher
level.
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If you choose not to give to your friends, you may have to give up your friends.
If you choose not to take from your friends, you will remain the amateur little novice your friends always said you were.
If you choose not to accept the characters that others have created, you will learn nothing, remain stagnant, and die an early, painful death.
IN the REALM of GAMING,
It is believed that
how you play now,
will affect your gaming later.
It is now possible to achieve
divine video game status,
and be worshiped as a deity
among players everywhere,
with the DexDrive.
The ultimate memory card,
going beyond mere game saves.
It allows you to upload saves
to your PC so others can download
and begin where you left off.
And they can reciprocate.
Take levels, characters, or team rosters
off the web and take your gaming
even higher.
Play. Save. Trade.
Greed is good. But so is generosity.
Because in this life, and the next,
what goes around,
comes around.
DexDrive
good karma
PlayStation
DexPlorer™
Nintendo 64
download saves at www.dexchange.net

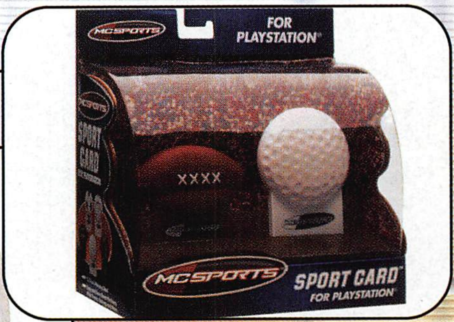
Peripheral Vision



PlayStation Products

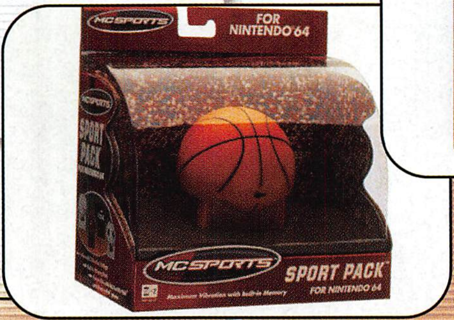
Tomb Raider III: Shark Byte Keycard (PS)

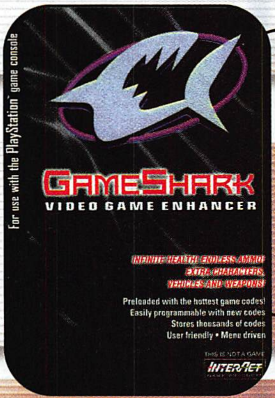
What's that you say? You suck at games (lovingly referred to at GF as SAG), but when it comes to *Tomb Raider 3* you're really bad. Well, the big brains at Interact have come up with a revolutionary idea: Sell someone else's saved games! Yes, that's right, now you too can experience *TM3* the way it was meant to be experienced, with all the weapons and all the levels. Best of all, you don't even have to play the game, because someone else already did it for you!



Designer Memory Cards (PS)

Now you to can feel like the ultimate fan boy with designer memory cards by Interact. Whether you fancy sports or have the occasional obsession with a certain British femme fatale, you now can show your ultimate appreciation with mutant memory cards! Each card literally resembles your favorite game characters from Lara Croft to the ever popular sports lines of baseball and basketball! If you've always wanted to stick it to Lara, here's your chance!



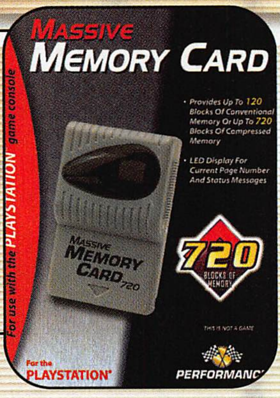


GameShark Game Enhancer (PS)

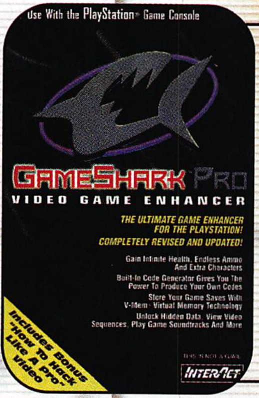
First there was the Game Genie, but for today's giant game market, players need something just a little more powerful. Enter the GameShark, the world's most popular and powerful game enhancer. With codes for nearly ever PS title already available, plus the ability to edit and customize your own codes (via a PC) even those old table coasters you call classics can seem new all over again. Plus, the GS helps alleviate that bothersome anti-import feature newer import games tend to have. Watch out for the shark (da-da...).

Massive Memory Card (PS)

Tired of running out of space on those old-fashioned memory cards? If this sounds like you, then the new Massive Memory Card by Performance is just the ticket! You'll never run out of space again, because this baby has over 96X the memory of a normal card! That's 1440 save blocks! A red led display helps you to keep track of just where your files are, so you'll never need to hunt them down. ECM liked it so much, he forced Fury to go out and buy him one (what a pal!).



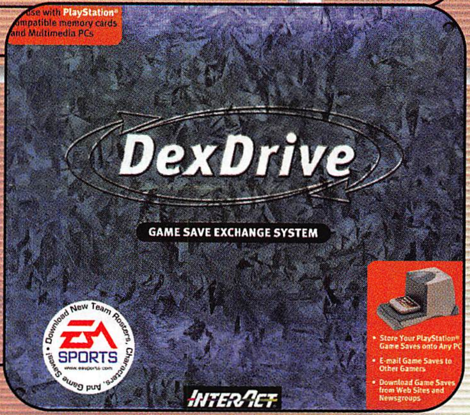
PV



GameShark Pro (PS)

Tired of logging on countless hours on the web just to find the right code? Well look no further! The all-new GameShark Pro adds the convenience of a built-in code generator! Add to that a Virtual Memory System which allows users to save their games onto eight standard PS memory cards already built into the GS Pro! View CD data such as FMV or Photo Files by using the 'Explorer' option, even listen to game music! This package even includes a "How to hack like a pro" video that shows you step-by-step on how to "hack like a pro". A must have for the gaming enthusiast!





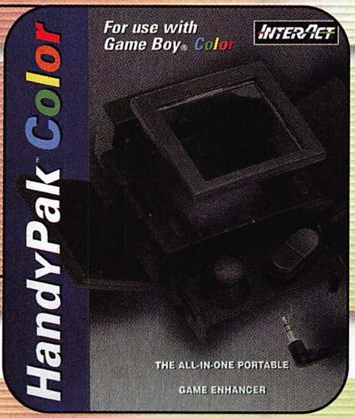
DexDrive (PS)

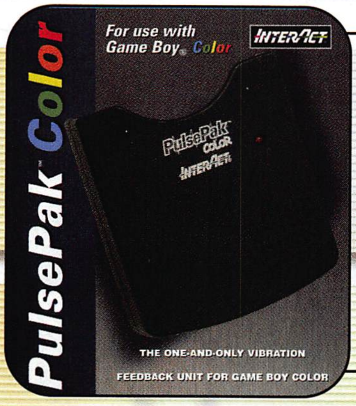
One of the coolest peripherals that could have ever come out, Interact's DexDrive is a truly revolutionary gaming product for the PS. The DD allows you to easily transport saved game files from your memory card to be uploaded to the internet, or e-mailed to a friend anywhere in the world! Imagine having updated sports rosters every week, unlocking the newest fighter or an extra set of wheels in your favorite racer? The possibilities are endless! The only drawback? You'll need a PC. Also available for the N64.

GameBoy Products

HandyPak Color

It might look like a GX TV for your color or regular GameBoy, but this strange looking device actually magnifies your GB's screen and boosts the sound quality as well! Also, the HandyPak allows for near-arcade style control with the addition of an analog-ish type stick as well as super deformed A and B buttons for your big fat thumb! But what really makes the HandyPak worth the dough is that it features a much needed back-light for night-time gaming... finally, no more hot candle wax dripping on your screen!



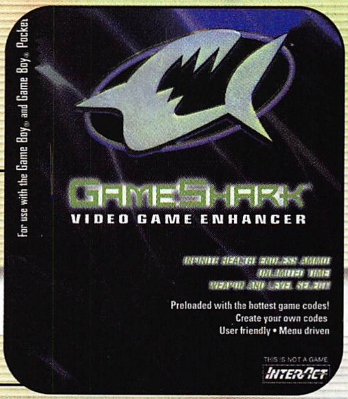


PulsePak Color

Now GameBoy Color owners everywhere can finally experience the joy of force feedback! Well, sort of. The PulsePak Color by Interact neatly snaps onto the bottom of your GameBoy Color and instantly transforms your GB into a rumbling machine! Even those who prefer their GB games in stereo can still attach their headphones into the PP with ease. Looks like *Tetris* just got a whole lot more exciting... let's get ready to rum-ble!

GameShark (GB)

Although it lacks the internet feature of its bigger-PS brother, the GB version of Interact's popular GameShark cheat machine still does its duty with almost every GB game out there. Jump higher, get stronger... live forever! That's right, even the worst players can feel what it's like to be a gaming wizard with the GS! Edit your own codes using the easy to use menu-driven screen or just use the ones it came with. Either way, it's GameShark and it's on GameBoy...need we say more?



Nintendo 64 Products (N64)



SharkPad Pro (N64)

Tired of your boring, old N64 controller? Why not pick up the new SharkPad Pro by Interact. It might not be as slim as the standard N64 pad, but this baby's got tons of exciting features such as auto fire, slow motion and a much-improved D-pad! Also it comes in a crystal clear case so you can witness up close the marvels of modern technology (even NASA's jealous!).



Misc. Items



GameGlovz

Extended N64 sessions got your gaming thumb calloused? Too much PlayStation making your fingers numb? Or maybe you've just always wanted to look like Michael Jackson. Whatever the reason, the new GameGlovz by GameProducts are just the ticket to make gaming all the more bearable. Each set of GG makes sure to cover your two most valuable properties, namely your thumb and forefinger. Different sizes for different hands complement the wacky color designs. Now about that Jackson thing...



Sport Pad (MC Sports)

Sports games; they're big. Sports pads...what's a sports pad? Evidently MCSPORTS is set to change all that with their newest Sport Pad series for both the N64 and PS! The PS pad features a real d-pad (as opposed to the traditional sectional), while the N64 pad has anti-sweat rubber coating. Both pads sport (no pun intended) a cool blue color and the MCSPORTS logo.



Racing Wheel (MadCatz)

Frustrated that normal PS pads, even with Dual Shock bliss, don't seem to do the job right on your favorite racing game? Tired of double-tapping with the D-pad to make that turn just right? Then MadCatz's newer Racing Wheel is for you! Comfortable, the Racing Wheel is designed to fit snugly into your left hand, and turn the steering knob with your right. Heck, it's even endorsed by Mario Andretti himself...if that actually means anything.

Steering Wheel (MadCatz)

Want to bring the realism home in an even bigger way? Then try out the new Steering Wheel for both the N64 and PS (sold separately)! Not full steering wheels, these half-wheels offer greater control and comfort for all your favorite racers...from *Gran Turismo* to *Beetle Adventure Racing*. Even better, the PS version features Dual Force (rumbling) action.





Light Magnifier (Pelican)

So you've got a new GameBoy color, but you're still disappointed that it's not backlit. Fear not, for Pelican has solved the problem! Their new Light Magnifier (aptly named) not only magnifies the screen, but adds the much-needed back-light, so no matter where you are, the games can go on.



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you if were me
could you stand up to the pressure of being named team captain?
stick handle, wearing a 225 lb. defenseman on your back like a sweater?
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it's not so easy, is it?
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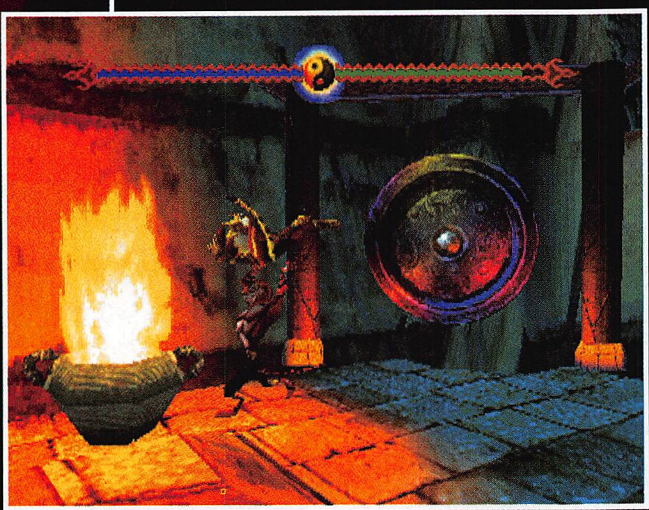
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VIEWPOINT



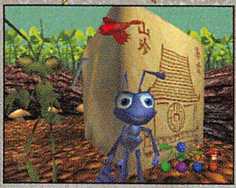








- G — Graphics
- C — Control
- P — Play Mechanics
- M — Music
- O — Originality



A Bug's Life 64

Nintendo 64
Disney
Platform

ECM: This is certainly quite a bit better than the recent PS rev. Seems that tweaking the control ever-so-slightly makes ALL the difference. Although the graphics seem to have taken a slight hit (a bit blurrier than its PS counterpart), the draw-in doesn't appear to be as severe. Still, it all boils down to the fact that if you're not eight years or younger you're not gonna derive too much entertainment from this one (Waka fits the age range pretty well on this one). For your little brother, at best.

G 8 C 6 P 5 M 7 O 6 — **70**

Eggo: I'm really surprised. For a movie-to-game port, this isn't half bad. I think the last movie game I saw was *Batman and Robin*, so almost anything is better than that. Unfortunately, *ABL* is meant for younger gamers, so the gameplay is a bit too simple for my tastes. The h-core will pass, but the casual consumer will eat it up like so many berries. Definitely a step in the right direction, but I guess it would be too much to ask for a game to be as good as the movie.

G 8 C 7 P 6 M 7 O 8 — **72**

Dangohead: Movie-to-game ports... last one I played was *The Fifth Element* and I was never the same dango again. So, imagine the horror as I had to sit through another movie-to-game translation, this time in the form of *A Bug's Life*. Sure, Disney has a pretty good track record for their video games, but *A Bug's Life* is simply too boring to play. Run around as the main bug character, Flick, while you pulverize enemies with your... berries? You mean, there's no power-ups? Oh, you can get a super berry! Whoopee... I'll pass.

G 7 C 8 P 7 M 6 O 6 — **70**



Fighting Force 64

Nintendo 64
Crave
Action

ECM: For what Core initially intended to be the heir apparent to the *Streets of Rage* dynasty (it was originally pitched to Sega as such for Saturn), the lack of any real gameplay combined with a bit of a hack job on the N64 (it's not as graphically appealing as the lackluster PS rev) equals some serious Zzzzz.... While I can understand Crave's desire to cash-in on the 'devoid of street brawlers' N64, I think the best bet here is to take a lead pipe to this one ASAP.

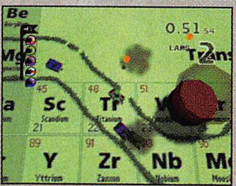
G 5 C 6 P 5 M 7 O 8 — **60**

Eggo: I can't fault Crave for rescuing *Fighting Force 64* from finished-game-but-unpublished limbo (resting there next to *Thrillkill*), because they can easily earn a few bucks with it. Still, I don't like this game... I never did. It's not fun, there's no strategy... basically no reason to play. It's no *Streets of Rage* or *Final Fight*, that's for sure. And the N64 version lacks the PS' lighting effects, so you'll gawk at the incredibly poor headlights of the van on the first level before reaching for that off switch.

G 6 C 7 P 5 M 8 O 7 — **49**

Fury: There's just no way around it folks. I hated *Fighting Force* on the PS and I hate it on the N64. Believe it or not this type of game is usually one of my favorites. But *Final Fight* this ain't; I can't believe I just put *Final Fight* in the same category as this sad soul! Broken play mechanics and bland graphics make for (insert derogatory remark of your choice here)! Where are the real beat-'em-ups, Nintendo? The "fun machine's" been everything but fun recently... where's *DK64*? I can only wait so long ya know!

G 7 C 6 P 7 M 6 O 4 — **65**



Micro Machines

Nintendo 64
Midway
Racing

ECM: Ya' know, it's one thing to bag on a game for its looks (hell, I do that to the GF staff on a daily basis) but when the game plays just as well as it ever has (minus the extra 4-players) I can't understand Eggo's rationale. Then again, when South Park is your mantra I guess I shouldn't expect too much. Like it or not, people, this game plays as well as it EVER did on PS; that equals huge fun in a cartridge wrapper. Some of the best multi-player action this side of a 16-bit Bomberman, no N64 owner should miss this one!

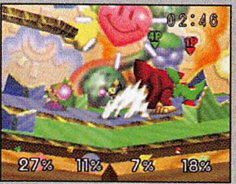
G 7 C 7 P 8 M 6 O 9 — **90**

Eggo: I am really upset. Compared to the 32-bit PlayStation version, *MM64* is like an ugly sister who doesn't get asked out to the prom. The graphics (especially the characters) and sound are but sickly apparitions compared to the PlayStation version. Unfortunately, I must curtail my anger slightly because the game still plays well, despite its appearance. I am willing to let visuals slide for solid gameplay, but when I KNOW this game looked better when it had 32 less bits, something just isn't right.

G 5 C 7 P 8 M 6 O 9 — **72**

Dangohead: One of the best multi-player games in the 32-bit era makes it onto the N64. And while the gameplay features and multi-player options are all found here, *Micro Machines V3* on the N64 is rather... hmm... I believe the word is "ugly." Don't bother playing the one player game since it's as fun as playing a one player Bomberman game (ask ECM... he drags in bums just to play a game). Still, if you're looking for a new multi-player game for your N64, make it a rental night with a few friends before you take the plunge.

G 7 C 8 P 8 M 6 O 9 — **82**



Super Smash Bros.

Nintendo 64
Nintendo
Fighting

Dangohead: Ignore the two naysayers next to me... They're closet Nintendo freaks, really. *Smash Brothers* is simply one of the most enjoyable games I've played on the N64. While not a serious fighting game by any means, whatcha got here is an above average one-player game and an AWESOME multi-player extravaganza. Throw in some old-school Nintendo characters, comical weapons, and cool stages, this is a game that every Nintendo-head must get. And the fact you can pummel Pikachu (finally) is a bonus.

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 8 — **87**

Eggo: *Smash Bros.* is original... I'll give it that. A novel 'fighting game' with those wacky Nintendo characters we've grown up with. Plus, you do the math... 4 players + N64 = 1,000,000 sold... and you have an instant winner on your hands. But I would still rather play *Mario Party* for my multi-player madness. There's just something hollow about the way *SB* plays. Maybe because the target audience is half my age. At least I got a kick out of the old Nintendo sound effects. Nothing more than a rental at best.

G 7 C 8 P 6 M 8 O 9 — **80**

Fury: Finally, Samus on my N64!! I've waited so long for... ugh, a fighting game?! Why a fighting game and not *Metroid*? Am I alone here, people? OK so it's a Nintendo fighter... time to enter the magical kingdom of fruit, what joy! Is it too much to ask for a semi-realistic *VF* or *Tekken*-style fighter some time before NCL retires the fun machine... and no, *Deadly Arts* doesn't count. *Smash Brothers* is fun... for like five minutes until monotony sets in. This game just lacks any real direction. Samus, where are you?

G 8 C 6 P 7 M 6 O 8 — **75**



Ehrgeiz

PlayStation
Square EA
Fighting

ECM: From the team that brought us *Tobal 2*?! Sign me up! Hey wait, what the hell is this?! Um, something must have creeped into Dream Factory's water supply, cause this isn't HALF the game that its predecessor was. Manic, 'run around and slap each other down' super-loose gameplay hurts... bad. Sure, throw in some *FF* characters and an 'RPG' mode and certain individuals will eat this up (<hack>, Fury, <cough>) but don't be fooled. *Power Stone* owns this game.

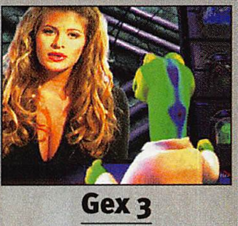
G 8 C 4 P 5 M 7 O 6 — **63**

Eggo: Well... it's a Square game and it's got *Final Fantasy VII* characters. Umm, can't say I'm crazy about the "free roaming beatdown" gameplay though. This type of fighting game just isn't for me, and even if I wanted to play a 'go anywhere to beat up Fury'-style game, I'd rather do it in *Power Stone*. Still, the ability to play as Cloud, Tifa, Sephiroth, Vincent, Yuffie, etc. is worth a rental. Too bad Cloud's sword is a little too powerful. Now it's time to cut up the guy to my right. "Oh, Fury...?"

G 8 C 8 P 6 M 8 O 8 — **81**

Fury: While Square might be the King of the RPG world, I've always shied away from their fighting games like *Tobal* and *Bushido Blade*. *Ehrgeiz* however is an entirely different story. True 100% 3D action and brilliant character design had me hooked from the get-go. While not as impressive as *Power Stone* on the DC, *Ehrgeiz* is still among the best looking PS fighters I've seen. Couple that with some great new tunes and a few familiar *FF7* tracks, and I simply had to own this baby. *FF8* it ain't... but hey, what is?

G 9 C 8 P 7 M 8 O 8 — **88**



Gex 3
PlayStation
Eidos
Platform

Of all the popular video game mascots, Gex was my least favorite. Perhaps it was my hatred for the 3DO that ruined my vision of the scaly reptilian. Either way, this is the best Gex adventure so far. The graphics look no different than in previous Gex titles, but in their own right are at least crisp and colorful. The humor on the other hand seems to be dragging a bit, after ripping on every popular movie franchise known to man. If you already own *Gex 2* I see no reason to waste money on the same old schtick.

G 7 C 7 P 6 M 7 O 5 **78**

Gex 3... better known as *Gex 2 + 1*. That's right people, Crystal Dynamics brings more of the same from our favorite or unfavorite reptile, so if you're a fan of the Gex series, you'll be in heaven. And if not? Well, *Gex 3* has a few new features that include driving in a tank *Goldeneye*-style, but believe me, if you've played *Gex 2*, there's nothing here that'll make you go hip-hop hooray: same graphics, same control, same play mechanics, and same old unfunny jokes. In short, same as *Gex 2*.

G 7 C 7 P 7 M 7 O 6 **80**

I'm beginning to wonder if I'm the only person in the world growing weary of Scavenger Hunt gameplay — it certainly seems like it at times. Go around, collect the items, ride around in cool vehicles, repeat. Solid control, good graphics and decent music can't save this one. Somebody really needs to inject a little originality in this dime a dozen genre. Sure, Gex has cool quips (that are genuinely funny), but I for one am done with this series until someone comes up with something new to do.

G 8 C 7 P 7 M 7 O 6 **75**



Ridge Racer Type4
PlayStation
Namco
Racing

While I've never been a huge fan of the *Ridge Racer* series, I do know quality when I see it. Countless available cars, a very cool story mode and precise control make for another Namco winner. But what's really important here folks is Reiko Nagase!! She is far too hot to be virtual... Damn the Man! Why can't Namco pull a *Weird Science* on this one... Ahh sorry about that, but *RR Type 4* is really the best racer I've seen on the PS. *Gran Turismo* was impressive, but definitely not the last word in racing!

G 8 C 9 P 9 M 8 O 7 **90**

Let's just get one thing straight here... the girl is mine. That being said, Namco doesn't slow down its engines with the fourth installment of *Ridge Racer*. Great control, excellent feel for speed, and Reiko Nagase... er, I mean, lots of cars, makes this one racing game that you'll play over and over again. The music simply fits the game like Reiko Nagase... er, I mean, a glove, and as an added bonus you get a beautiful 60 FPS hi-res version of the original *Ridge Racer*. Reiko... I mean, Namco we love you!

G 9 C 9 P 9 M 10 O 8 **94**

I was expecting a lot from the combined efforts of the *Rage Racer* and *Ridge Racer* teams, but maybe I expected a little too much. Trying to be *GT* and *RR* at the same time leaves a bad taste in my mouth. They should have concentrated on one or the other and not the bizarre mish-mash they've managed to put together here. While the sensation of speed is decent (nowhere near *Rage Racer* levels) and the visuals solid, I would have much-preferred that they'd stuck to the old skool style of play. Maybe on PSY?

G 7 C 8 P 7 M 5 O 6 **75**



Shadow Madness
PlayStation
Crave
Role-Playing

I won't try to hide this... I am not all that fond of RPG's. Try and forgive me people, but it's the sad truth. With that said, *Shadow Madness* is, from what I can tell, the poor man's *Final Fantasy VII*. It's got a nice story, crisp graphics but lacks the visual show-stoppers of a *Final Fantasy* or *Panzer Saga*. It does at times sport some impressive CG and the pre-rendered backgrounds were a nice touch. Lucky for Crave, *Shadow Madness* is being released before *FF8* - anything after would have been suicide!

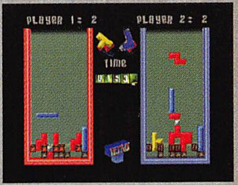
G 8 C 7 P 7 M 6 O 6 **82**

Shadow Madness is a pretty good clone of *Final Fantasy VII*. By making that statement, many of you are either jumping for joy or calling me a heretic. But hey, with cool battle movement features and the optional attack settings, *Shadow Madness*' only fault is the not-so-great visuals. The pre-rendered backgrounds are nice, but the characters themselves aren't as detailed as I would've liked them to be. Still, with an excellent story and cool gameplay features, *SM* is a nice appetizer before the *FF8* main course.

G 7 C 8 P 9 M 9 O 7 **84**

No, I did not like *Final Fantasy VII*... at all. That having been said, I like *Shadow Madness*. Sure it's lacking in the aesthetic department, but the simple fact is that Ted Woolsley wrote a great story. Couple that with the fact that the game, although walking the WD-blazed path, works much better than the aforementioned company's outings simply because the game was designed with the humor in mind from the outset, making ALL the difference. An amusing RPG that you shouldn't miss.

G 6 C 7 P 7 M 9 O 8 **86**



Tetris
PlayStation
Hasbro
Puzzle

Wow, would you look at this... *Tetris* on the Playstation! Well, I guess it just doesn't get any better than this. Why bother with *FF8* or *Alpha 3* - *Tetris* is where it's at! Sorry for that, but I've been there on my Gameboy when I was like 13, and to tell you the truth I was not looking to relive any of that old magic again... nooo pimples!! Sure, the game's got improved graphics and the option to change your blocks position at the last moment was a nice touch but ya know what, this is *TETRIS*... retro gaming is old news!

G 8 C 7 P 7 M 6 O 5 **70**

At first, I approached this game quite cynically. "Another *Tetris*? When will it ever stop?" Then I picked up the controller and... two hours later, the only thing that could pull me away from the PlayStation was word that *Saga Frontier 2* had arrived. Say what you will about the *Tetris Empire*, but it's still the best puzzle game on console next to *Bust-A-Move*. This one offers new features in gameplay (colored parts of pieces) and the option to play your own CD music. Nothing like puzzlin' to Rob Zombie!

G 5 C 8 P 9 M 9 O 6 **89**

Yes, Hasbro has put some unique twists on the old formula that everyone's (and I really mean EVERYONE - even my dog's played this game) played countless times before. Sure, every console needs a version of *Tetris* (I got mine for DC), but with one rev of this game already out there (from Jaleco, no less) does anybody really need another? Yeah, putting in your own music CD is cool, and the colored blocks are pretty to look at, but there's no escaping the fact that this is *Tetris*... again.

G 7 C 8 P 9 M 8 O 8 **80**



D&D Collection
Saturn (Import)
Capcom
Action

Well, it finally came even after the final nail had been hammered into the Saturn's coffin. *D&D Collection* contains both *Tower of Doom* and *Shadow Over Mystara*, both of which were extremely popular in the arcades. Mix in the D&D Adventure aspects, *Final Fight*-like gameplay, and fun multi-player action and you can write off the loading problems easily (unless you're the cynic next to me). A must-have for all Saturn owners who are holding off their last farewells to the Saturn.

G 8 C 9 P 7 M 8 O 8 **86**

Two words sum it up best: "Now Loading." I love the game, graphics, theme... everything but that blasted CD. Even with the RAM pack, this game loads way too much; the flow of everything is completely disjointed because of new characters being selected, short stages being passed, names being entered, etc. What it leads to is a lot of awkward, elevator-like conversations since you don't have enough time for a meaningful dialogue, but the lulls are long enough that you can't just sit there quietly.

G 8 C 8 P 9 M 8 O 7 **82**

Wow. Never expected to actually lay hands on this much-delayed piece of power, but here it is... finally. Sure the load times are irritating (hello, 4 meg RAM cart?), but the simple fact is that if you're looking for a blazing, 2D, *Final Fight*-esque action game, you've come to the right place. In fact, if 2D wasn't making more of a mini-comeback (*Legend of Mana*, *SaGa Frontier 2*, *The Adventures of Ralph*), I'd be heaping even more praise on this port of justice. Take your Saturn out for one last stroll...

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 8 **88**



House of the Dead 2
Dreamcast (Import)
Sega
Gun Game

Sega has always delivered with their arcade ports (except for *House of the Dead* on Sat, ack!)and *House of the Dead 2* is an indication of what future DC games will look like. Drop-dead gorgeous graphics and good enemy placement, the only problem is how frickin' hard this game is. This game is definitely not recommended for the soft, kitty-cat types, as only the hard-core need apply. The additional modes of gameplay add mondo amounts of replayability to this excellent title. DC fans, go and get it!

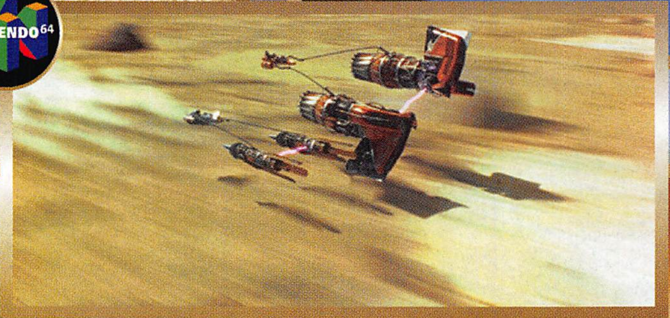
G 10 C 9 P 8 M 9 O 8 **94**

This game ranks right up there with *Power Stone* and *Sonic Adventure* as one of the best-looking video games I have ever seen. Its only problem is the difficulty. If you don't fall into the category of "Ninja Gamer," then you'll probably live up to the game's name and quickly become frustrated. But, if you have mad skills, then you're in for a treat. And if you were one of those poor unfortunates who owned that horrible Saturn version of *HotD*, this game is Sega's apology to you... they got it right this time.

G 10 C 8 P 8 M 9 O 8 **92**

Amazing graphics, blazing, super-hard gameplay (even on 'very easy'), and more zombies than you can shake a maggot at. However, there is one small, rotting fly in the bile: this game simply isn't as good as the first chapter. Sure, there's plenty to shoot, and the game has plenty of extra modes to hone your sharp-shooting skills on, but it ranks third in Sega's zombie trilogy (*HotD* and *Zombie Revenge* on Naomi are superior). Still, it's damn fun and yet another reason to hop on the DC train. All aboard!

G 10 C 8 P 7 M 5 O 6 **86**







It's like being a kid in a candy store. With the pending release of what will be the biggest movie (it's so much fun wielding absolutes like a loaded gun), LucasArts and Nintendo were kind enough to fly a crack squad of game mag editors up to Lucas' Skywalker Ranch (commonly referred to as "the place where the magic happens" around *GF*) for a briefing on their latest *Star Wars*-related title: *Star Wars Episode 1 Racer*. After recovering from having visited the 'holiest of holies,' I'll attempt to relay to you exactly what transpired...

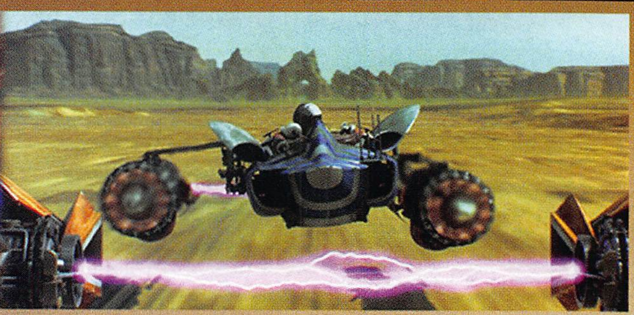
Unlike the PlayStation, where racing games are as plentiful as red necks at a NASCAR event, the N64 doesn't have to deal with the same over-saturation. Sure, it's got more than its fair share, but when it really comes down to it, how many racers on Nintendo's bread winner (oops, that's the GameBoy) are worth their salt? That's right, just about none of them. Outside of the 'gee whiz, look at this' antics of *Beetle Adventure Racing* and Nintendo's own *F-Zero X* (still the best racer on the console, whether anybody likes it or not), the starting grid is about as exciting as watching the Human Bomb at one of those 'Red Neck Only' truck pulls (ya know, "get down and dirty in the booooooog!").

At its current state of development (i.e. mostly complete), *Racer* looks like a force to be reckoned with. Blistering speeds, solid control, and large, geometrically 'heavy' levels. In fact, these are probabl the single most detailed levels ever seen in an N64 race (*Beetle Adventure Racing* is its only rival). Full Expansion Pa support is in, and the game looks simply amazing, zipping along at a reasonably quick frame rate — most of the time Control is handled through the ubiquitous (anybody else sick of this migraine-causing verbage?) control stick, which han dles the action amazingly well. If Lucas sticks to their guns there's even a chance that dual analog pad support will be enabled (each pad controlling one engine — only for the hardest of the hard-core!).

The level design is spectacular. From the dusty, arid tracks on Tatooine to the more futuristic cities hosted in this game (which incidentally do not make appearances in the film), the levels are incredibly well designed. Each track opens up, *Ridge Racer*-like, as you complete higher levels of difficulty. So while the Tatooine track may mostly resemble the traditional racing oval at first, as you progress

STAR WARS EPISODE I RACER







it will gradually become more complex. The later levels are a spectacle, with everything from mammoth cities replete with zero gravity areas, to lakes of methane which your after-burners will ignite into a volcanic explosion... pity the poor fools caught in your wake.

As of this moment, however, the frame rate needs help... badly. In the single player mode, the game generally runs from the low to mid twenties (with a full grid of competitors) on the less complex levels (Tatooine, for instance). On the more math-intensive levels, that number will drop to the mid to high teens. Still playable, but it certainly isn't anything to marvel at. However, where the game really nose dives is in the two-player split screen mode: at one point (thanks to a handy debug mode buried in the demo rev) we were nearly able to drive the frame rate down to single digits (!) — it almost became a game in itself, albeit not exactly the best time we've ever had (shoulda' heard us screaming "14, 13, 13, 11... come on 10!"). Needless to say (and in subsequent conversations with Lucas) the frame rate will be improved prior to release.

Velocity-wise it fits snugly in between the two, keeping up and surpassing *WOXL* for the most part, but a long, long way from the window-shattering speeds (60 FPS!) of Nintendo's own *F-Zero X*. Even though the frame rate suffers quite a bit, the illusion of speed in *Racer* is breathtaking. The game seems to scream along, even if it is much too choppy at this early state. If indeed the frame rate matter is rectified, this could be the fastest racing game to ever hit a home system (that's a big 'if', though).

Needless to say, *Racer* could shape up to be something special provided a number of things fall into place. Perhaps the saddest aspect at this point, however, is that this may be the first *Star Wars*-based game worth playing on a console (the PC lucked out with *Jedi Knight*) — the rest resembled Dack after he was stomped by an AT-AT in *Empire*. May the Force be with this one (well, we needed at least one lame *Star Wars* reference)... **ECM**









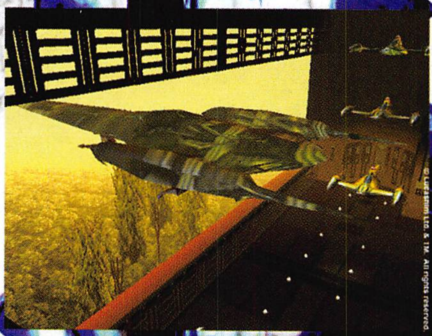
STAR WARS EPISODE I THE PHANTOM MENACE





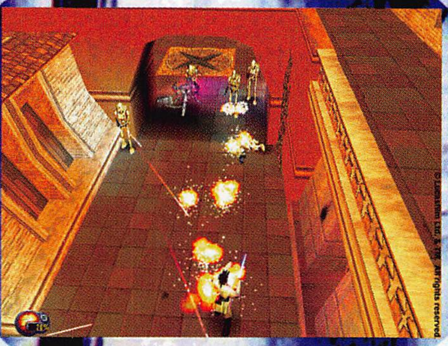
'Tis the Year of the *Phantom Menace*. If you're a movie-lover, there is only *Menace*. If you're a collectibles fanatic, there is only *Menace*. If you're a gamer, there is only *Menace*... that is, unless it sucks, and we are once again forced to swallow a huge spoonful of galactic castor oil. It is a sad irony that the most popular movie franchise in history, complete with rich landscapes, a juggernaut license, and unprecedented quality control, has yet to produce a solid video game which has either a shred of originality or good gameplay.

But, I digress... With the resuscitation of the movie franchise comes a chance for LucasArts to reinvent itself. With fresh material and public interest at an all-time high, these games will have the luxury of tapping into uncharted *Star Wars* story.







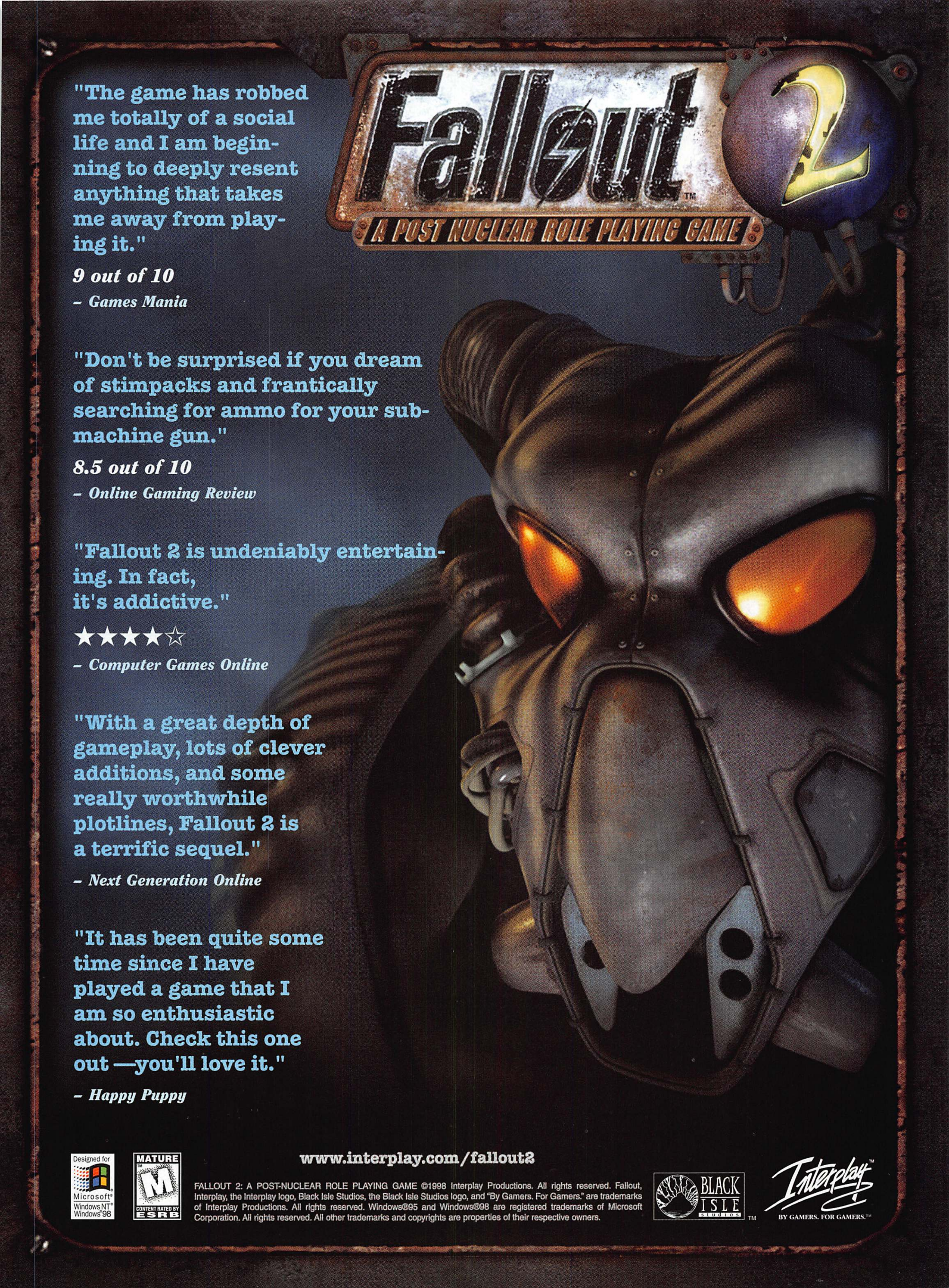


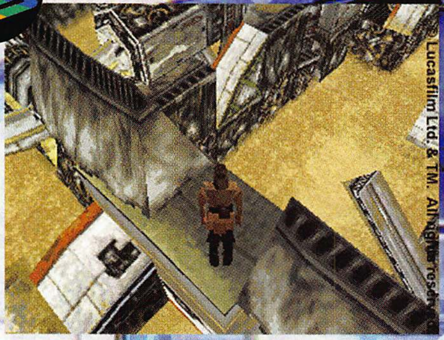
Star Wars Episode I: Phantom Menace will focus on the movie storyline instead of some offshoot adventure. The game allows you to control four of the film's protagonists: Obi-Wan, Qui Gon, Captain Panaka, or the Empress. You first start off as Obi-Wan, but the game isn't broken up into sections, each starring a different character. Instead, the developers tried to emulate the feel of a real movie by cutting from one scene to another (in what they hope is a seamless fashion), showing many different actions which take place concurrently. Each of the four playable characters is unique in his or her abilities and weapons. While Obi-Wan and Qui Gon will utilize lightsabers and "The Force," the Empress and Captain will have to make do with good looks and clumsy blasters. They'll be joined by many others on the way, including Anakin and Jar Jar (the comic relief with the big ears). The enemies that they do battle with range from battle and destroyer droids, to assassins to Darth Maul (how cool looking is that guy?). Also included are familiar denizens of the *Star Wars* universe, from Tusken Raiders and jawas, to the Hutt himself. You can also expect some surprise appearances from other *SW* notables.

*all shots on this page are taken from the PC version.

DEVELOPER - BIG APE PRODUCTIONS
PUBLISHER - LUCASARTS

X PLAYERS
AVAILABLE MAY 19


Fallout 2
A POST NUCLEAR ROLE PLAYING GAME
"The game has robbed me totally of a social life and I am beginning to deeply resent anything that takes me away from playing it."
9 out of 10
– Games Mania
"Don't be surprised if you dream of stimpacks and frantically searching for ammo for your submachine gun."
8.5 out of 10
– Online Gaming Review
"Fallout 2 is undeniably entertaining. In fact, it's addictive."
★★★★☆
– Computer Games Online
"With a great depth of gameplay, lots of clever additions, and some really worthwhile plotlines, Fallout 2 is a terrific sequel."
– Next Generation Online
"It has been quite some time since I have played a game that I am so enthusiastic about. Check this one out —you'll love it."
– Happy Puppy
Designed for Microsoft Windows NT Windows 98
MATURE M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
www.interplay.com/fallout2
FALLOUT 2: A POST-NUCLEAR ROLE PLAYING GAME ©1998 Interplay Productions. All rights reserved. Fallout, Interplay, the Interplay logo, Black Isle Studios, the Black Isle Studios logo, and "By Gamers. For Gamers." are trademarks of Interplay Productions. All rights reserved. Windows®95 and Windows®98 are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. All other trademarks and copyrights are properties of their respective owners.
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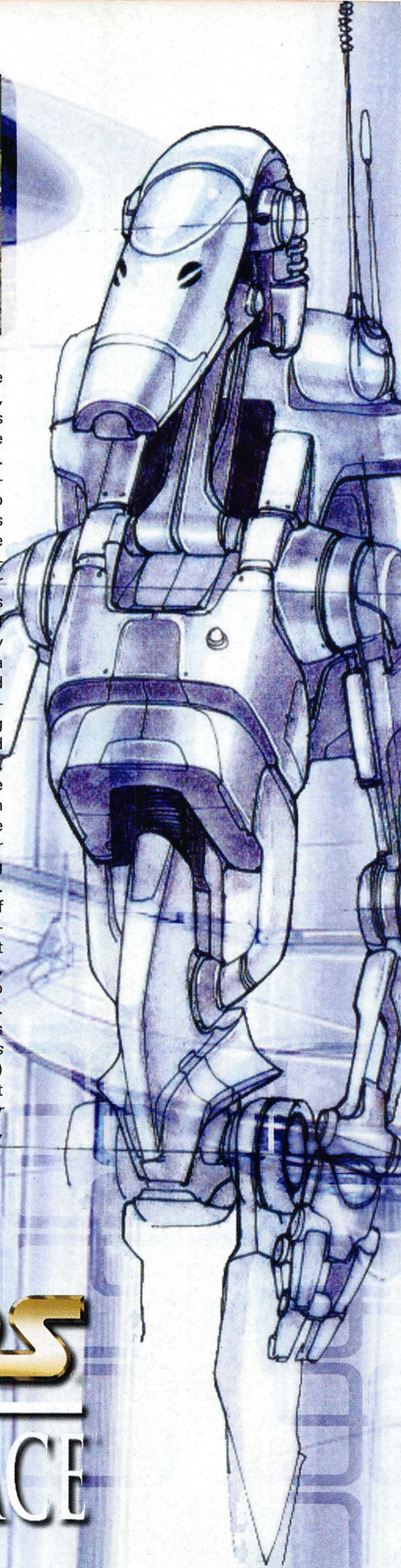




Most of the action is standard adventure game fare. There is a lot of NPC interaction, interspersed with combat and cut scenes (and no, none of them are digitized movie clips) to help propel the story along. Although *PM* stays true to the movie's storyline, there has been a great deal added to best facilitate gameplay. Boss characters have been included to lock horns with; side quests have been added to give adventurers the chance to earn better weapons or comrades in arms; and additional areas have been created to broaden the scope of the game. One example would be the city of Mos Espa on Tatooine. You'll spend a great deal of time talking with locals and accepting secondary missions before continuing on to other star systems, including Coruscant (the Republic capitol world) and Naboo, one of the movie's primary settings.

While you won't find any snippets of the movie or familiar actors' voices, John Williams' brilliant score will serve as the backdrop to your adventure. Deflect blaster bolts and duel Darth Maul, all to the rousing music of the century's most noted composer.

While it's hard to shake the skepticism of seeing one too many *Star Wars* titles disappoint, I can't help but feel optimistic about *Phantom Menace*. The graphics are good, the sound is excellent, and no one has to sell us on whether the story is compelling. We can only hope that Big Ape Productions (responsible for games such as *Zombies Ate My Neighbors* and *Herc's Adventures*) manages to add the gameplay, a facet that has been all too elusive in previous *Star Wars* titles. Now you'll have to excuse me, I gotta go get in line for tickets. **EN**



*ALL SHOTS ON THIS PAGE ARE FROM THE PLAYSTATION VERSION.

STAR WARS EPISODE I THE PHANTOM MENACE


This guy is searching for his next meal—and you're it.
Watch where you tread – torturous traps await the unwary adventurer.
Whip your way through Dracula's army of the undead.
Killer outfit. Too bad the night life sucks.
Get geared up for the bloodiest vampire battles ever. In Castlevania's 12th incarnation, you enter a tangled, trap-filled castle populated by the evil Count and his minions. Go as one of two fearless fighters of your choice, equipped with whoop-ass weaponry. But be warned, while you can dress to kill, if you lack the skill – your night is really gonna suck.
Castlevania®
NINTENDO64
TEEN
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
KONAMI
1-900-896-HINT (4468) www.konami.com $0.95 per minute charge. $1.25 per minute support from game counselor. Touch tone phone required. Minors must have parental permission before dialing. Hints are available 24 hours a day. Live support Monday - Friday 8:30am to 4:30pm PST only. Prices and availability subject to change. U.S. accessibility only. The ratings icon is a trademark of the Interactive Digital Software Association. Nintendo 64 and the 3-D "N" logo are trademarks of Nintendo of America Inc. ©1996 Nintendo of America Inc. CASTLEVANIA and Konami are registered trademarks of Konami Co., Ltd. ©1998 Konami of America, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

NO RESPECT!

Games That Got NO Respect
While everybody knows and loves games like *GoldenEye* (number one again!), *Metal Gear Solid*, and *Zelda* there's a veritable flood of games that came out, landed on store shelves, and were driven to the bargain bins of America shortly (in some cases, mere weeks) thereafter by an uncaring public eager only for the "next big thing." Team GameFan, however, is tired of this. Thus each editor has compiled a list of games that were either: 1.) Poor sellers that deserved better, 2.) Games that sold decently but very few people understood, or 3.) Games that were a victim of either of the above simply because 'other' magazines didn't dare give them the coverage of which they were worthy. So if you have a few extra sawbucks to blow, you could do a lot worse than giving any one of these games a try. Heck, most of the games on this list can be found for as little as $5 used. Beats shelling out bucks for games that aren't worth the silicon they're pressed on, eh?



ECM

1. *One* (ASC/VC, PS) — Run and gun action like the world has **never** seen (even puts *Contra* on SNES to shame). However, the casual gamer simply didn't "get it" and this game died a quick, ugly death.
2. *NiGHTS* (Sega, SS) — Though this game sold well, nobody ever really came to grips with the phenomenal experience that is, and always will be, *NiGHTS*.
3. *Broken Helix* (Konami, PS) — Konami USA's 3D action adventure title starring Bruce Campbell proved that actors and video games **can** co-exist peacefully—another bargain bin champ.
4. *Project Overkill* (Konami, PS) — Like *One*, this was straight-ahead 'death to all that oppose you' shooting action. And like *One*, it got zero accolades from consumers and the press.
5. *Devil Dice* (THQ, PS) — The greatest puzzle game ever? Yep! Did it sell at all? Nope. While Japanese gamers made it a runaway best-seller, the US gamer let it die a near-instant death.
6. *SkullMonkeys* (Dreamworks, PS) — Who needs blazing 2D anyway?! Among the greatest 2D platformers ever, *SM* was cast from the same mold as classics like *Super Mario Bros. 3* and its ilk.
7. *Dark Savior* (Sega, SS) — Climax's 'sequel' to *LandStalker* hit the Saturn with a dull, wet, thud. Despite some jumping issues (the floating castle... kill me) it still stands as the Saturn's finest action adventure.
8. *PowerSlave* (Virgin, SS) — Lobotomy has moved onto gambling games (why, oh why?!), but this one still stands as their finest hour and one of the best single-player first-person shooters ever.
9. *Legend of Oasis* (Sega, SS) — Probably the best action/RPG to be found on 32-bit received little to no recognition. Being on Saturn certainly didn't help matters.
10. *Critical Depth* (GT, PS) — Singletrac's first GT-published title didn't make any waves, and it's a shame seeing as how it's probably the best "car combat" game available.

FURY

1. *NiGHTS* (SS) — How anyone could have overlooked this Sonic Team masterpiece is just beyond me. *NiGHTS* deserved to sell a million copies!
2. *Guardian Heroes* (SS) — This was 2D gaming at its best! If gamers only knew how unbelievable Treasure games usually turned out, *GH* would have sold truckloads!
3. *SkullMonkeys* (PS) — In an industry overrun with violent games, the lighthearted and hilarious nature of *SkullMonkeys* went virtually unnoticed.
4. *Astal* (SS) — Perhaps Saturn owners were holding out for a *Sonic* game... either way, *Astal* was a cool character and a great game!
5. *Clockwork Knight 1 & 2* (SS) — More platforming power on the Saturn was once again overlooked by fans searching for the 3D experience.
6. *One* (PS) — This game was sooo good-looking that I thought for sure the developers of *One* would retire as millionaires... go figure.
7. *Panzer Dragoon Saga* (SS) — Considered by some to be the finest 32-bit RPG ever made, it sadly saw little attention on a fading console.
8. *Heart Of Darkness* (PS) — On a console that favored the 3D experience, *HOD* deserved recognition as one of the best looking and original PS games available!
9. *Skeleton Warriors* (SS) — A great soundtrack only complimented this killer 2D platformer. Alas, the Saturn just ran out of steam.
10. *Legend Of Oasis* (SS) — Brilliant, hand-drawn Action RPG... need I say more?

It's fairly obvious upon reading my list that I favored the Saturn over the PlayStation. If you were a 2D fan like myself, the Saturn was the obvious choice between the two consoles. Sadly, most gamers demanded the 3D experience in their games, and you know developers were more than happy to deliver. The Saturn's demise was very heartfelt by this gamer, and unfortunately led to a serious lack of 2D games within the industry. Hopefully, the coming years will see a rebirth of 2D gaming, or I'm just gonna pack up my gear and move to Canada, my little buckaroos [El Niño's note: I heard that!].



TEETER

1. *NiGHTS* (SS) — My favorite Saturn game of all-time... so ahead of its time that it actually hurt itself.
2. *Castlevania: SotN* (PS) — No advertising didn't help, perhaps being included in the Greatest Hits series will...
3. *Fighters Megamix* (SS) — This was my favorite 3D fighter ever, a true testament to a wacky idea done right.
4. *Guardian Heroes* (SS) — 2D insanity heaven, Treasure outdid themselves early on with this Saturn masterpiece... too bad nobody cared.
5. *Project Overkill* (PS) — Buckets of blood and gore galore couldn't help this rise above the $12 bin... the end of the isometric era...*sigh*
6. *Broken Helix* (PS) — Even Bruce Campbell's awesome voice-overs couldn't save this 4D super adventure, which was suspiciously similar to that ol' *Metal Gear* game...
7. *Panzer Dragoon Saga* (SS) — Leave it to Sega to bring out one of their best games when it was far, far too late.
8. *Enemy Zero* (SS) — Who says the Saturn can't do full-motion video...?!
9. *SkullMonkeys* (PS) — Lots of clay, original ideas, a hilarious soundtrack, and a cool character couldn't save this one... why?!
10. Sega NetLink (SS) — The way Sega manhandled this great idea was a crime to anyone who bought one (like me).

As you might be able to tell from my list of forgotten 32-bitters, the Saturn was obviously the 'System of Choice' when it came to having great games that never really got the respect they deserved. Just goes to show you what great advertising can do, even for a rotten title (just ask Sony). Also, you may notice the complete absence of any N64 titles... that's easy to explain. N64 games sell so well, it's unlikely that any great game (minus the awful Gametek titles) will ever slip by, at least for the time being. But games sell better now than they've ever sold before, so things are definitely looking up. Cheers!

EGGO

1. *Deception II* (PS) — I probably played this game more than any other this year.
2. *SkullMonkeys* (PS) — Hilarious, genius, misunderstood... now the Neverhood is makin' indy movies <sob>
3. *Parappa the Rapper* (PS) — The one that started it all... with the catchiest, toe-tappin' music this side of a cooking chicken.
4. *Monster Rancher* (PS) — All two copies of this game usually were sold out everywhere I went... is that the demand they expected to fill?
5. *Devil Dice* (PS) — It was a mega-blockbuster in Japan, and it's way above average... too bad it sold less copies than sides on a dice.
6. *Panzer Dragoon Saga* (SS) — A game that deserved to be in the same sentence as *Final Fantasy VII*... but now you're laughing, right?
7. *Micro Machines V3* (PS) — Reason enough to own a multi-tap... but how many people own multi-taps?
8. *Treasures of the Deep* (PS) — Lotta fun, lotta copies still on shelves.
9. *Heart of Darkness* (PS) — Up there with *Metal Gear Solid* as my game of the year.
10. *Irritating Stick* (PS) — The epitome of "no respect."

While it would've been easy for me to ramble off 10 Saturn games for this list, I chose not to. Cuz quite simply, you could've thrown almost every Saturn game created onto this list. But I decided to spare you the Saturn soapbox in order to draw your attention to some cool PlayStation titles that you might actually buy and play (dunno 'bout you, but my Saturn is a li'l dusty, as of late).

EL NIÑO

1. *Monster Rancher* (PS) — More the fault of Tecmo than the consumer, not enough copies of this game made it to the shelves.
2. *Devil Dice* (PS) — To all *GameFan* readers who didn't buy this game: "You're not gaming enthusiasts."
3. *VR Baseball '98* (PS) — The best baseball sim is constantly overlooked.
4. *One* (PS) — This game rocked and all who dogged it have no taste.
5. *Tobal No. 1* (PS) — In a genre full of garbage, it was criminal that this didn't do well (we won't even get into the no-show of the sequel).
6. *Last Gladiator* (SS) — Saturn's pinball extravaganza remains the best on console.
7. *Blasto* (PS) — Just kidding...
8. *Baku Baku* (SS) — A superb puzzle game, it was a shame to see it fizzle out and die.
9. *Deception 2* (PS) — Maybe a little high concept for some, but definitely in need of more respect
10. *3D Baseball* (PS) — If Crystal Dynamics had had the licensing, this game would have rocked. Ahead of its time.

I don't even know why we bother making up these lists. It is clear that the majority of game consumers out there would rather throw their hard-earned money at titles with robust marketing campaigns and buxom leading ladies. It seems that bells and whistles are all anyone cares about anymore. My friends are a perfect example, preferring the flashy commentary and brand name of *Triple Play* over *VR Baseball*, a better playing and smarter baseball sim. They even *admitted* the latter was better playing, but opted for the former's prettier package. Gotta go, looks like ECM's about to kick my soapbox out from under me.




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YOU RESCUE BEAUTIFUL WOMEN.
WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF
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The ultimate in tank warfare. 17 levels. 12 enemy Tribes. Over 1,000 intense battles.
Up to 4 player action, with split and quad screen modes. Supports Rumble Pak™.
It's the year 2001. The world has endured a nuclear holocaust. 99% of Earth's females are dead. The surviving few have risen to the status of QueenLords, holy entities, and the only means to mankind's survival. BattleTanx™ thrusts you into the role of BattleLord, master of armored tank warfare. You rumble across post-apocalypse America, leveling cities and destroying roving gangs of desperate Tribesmen - all in an effort to save the QueenLords, and civilization itself.
• Awesome 3D action & spectacular weapons effects: guided missiles, lasers, swarmer missiles, nuclear weapons & more.
• 4 types of furious 3D gameplay - BattleLord, Death Match, Annihilation & Campaign.
• 3 camera views - First person, third person and the fortress railgun.
RATING PENDING RP CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
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SUPER SMASH BROS.





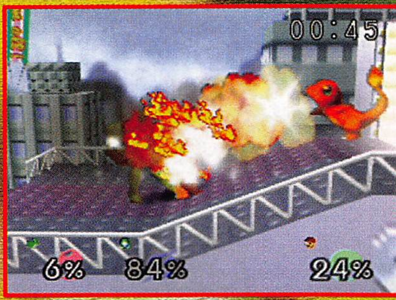
The Making of a Champion

Growing up on the mean streets of Brooklyn, NY, Mario always knew he was destined for great things, despite his humble working-class beginnings. Fixing leaky faucets, plumbing dank cesspools, and generally making life all peachy for those of greater means, it was all in a day's work for the intrepid every-man from the borough by the bridge. However, nothing could have prepared him for the travails he would face upon defeating a distraught simian after the love of his life, Pauline.

From there, things got a little rough: Pauline dumped him (turns out apes are more 'sensitive' than plumbers); trapped in a dead-end job with his nobody brother, Luigi (exterminating crabs and turtles in the city sewer), Mario was on the fast track to nowhere. Then one day, while workin' on the pipes, he happened across the valve of a lifetime: a gateway to the magical Mushroom Kingdom. Hearing that the people of that troubled land needed a hero in their darkest hour, Mario rose to the challenge, overthrowing the dark overlord, King Koopa, and rescuing the beloved Princess Toadstool (Peach, to her many friends and admirers). Now it was time for Mario to shine!

Shine he did through countless trials and tribulations. Mario accepted every challenge with grim determination and a stoic air (becoming a world-class gymnast in the process). Challenge after arduous challenge was dispatched with heroic flair. However, all previous victories and accolades mean nothing in light of his latest and greatest challenge; a task that may undo all that Mario has fought and striven to build and maintain through the years — a task that even the mighty one may find too difficult to complete. Welcome to the no-holds-barred world of *Super Smash Bros*. Have your rosary beads handy...





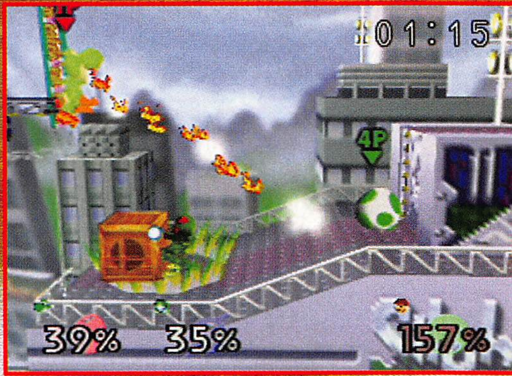




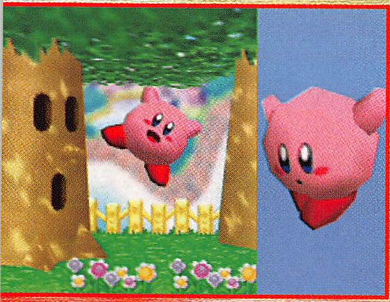
Let's Get Ready to Rumble... Nintendo-style!

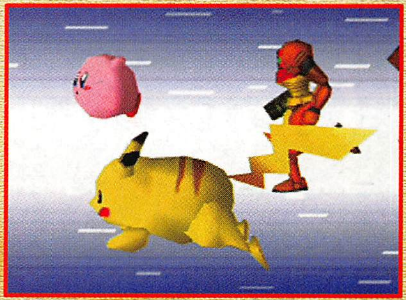
SSB brings together just about every notable character in the Nintendo universe for an Ultimate Fighting Championship duel to the death (all right, so nobody ever *really* dies in a Nintendo game... sort of like the Marvel Comics of video games). Mario, Link, Samus (of *Metroid* fame), Kirby (HAL's contribution), Donkey Kong, Pikachu (this little yellow monkey's had it coming for a while...), Fox McCloud (*StarFox*'s ace pilot), and Yoshi. For a system that was deficient in anything remotely resembling a good fighting game (outside of the few that still have some meager respect for *MK4*), *SSB* is the immediate king of the hill.





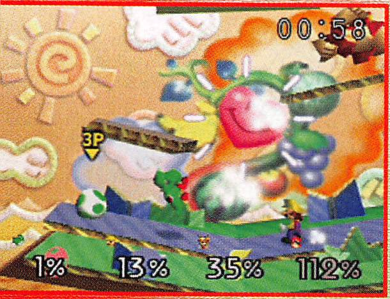
 ECM: PIKACHU FINALLY GETS HIS... | DEVELOPER - HAL/NINTENDO PUBLISHER - NINTENDO | 1-4 PLAYERS AVAILABLE APRIL 26 | VIEWPOINT SCORE :93

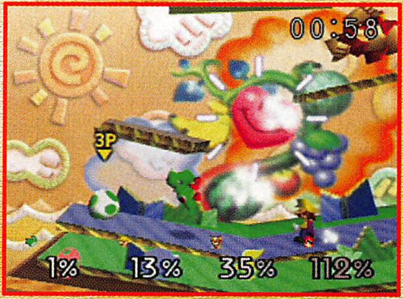




The Bomberman of Fighting Games

Some of you may recall during the 16-bit days when Bomberman reigned supreme as the best multi-player game the geek set ever received — "I'm a geek, you're a geek, wouldn't ya like to be a geek too?" The frenzied 4-player bouts (5 on the Duo) led to a the creation of a nice tidy little sub-genre directly beneath the *Madden*-fests that most college males partook (followed by *NHL*-fests, and even the occasional "I've got no money" NES *TecmoBowl*-fests). Since we can't count on Hudson to keep us entertained anymore, *Smash Bros.* stands as the spiritual heir to its raucous good times.

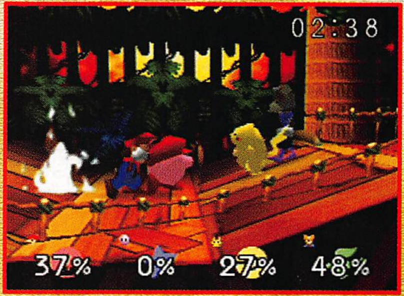




It's GO Time!!!

While you can play *Smash Bros.* as a single player contest it's really all about the 4-player versus mode, as tends to be the case with most N64 games (anybody still trying to play *Mario Party* alone... how sad). Each player takes control of their chosen champion and competes to send his adversaries spiraling down to an explosive end. Control is handled through the ever-temperamental 3D stick. Unfortunately, at first the game can be excruciatingly difficult to come to grips with since it's played in an entirely 2D perspective (no Z-movement here, folks) making the 3D stick an entirely unnecessary evil. Until you come to grips with the 'wicked wand' you're gonna have some serious problems (controller meet TV, TV meet controller, <thwack>!). However, once you break the 'no definite directions' boundary you'll be smashin' and thrashin' in no time flat.





Each character draws from a well of martial skill, replete with special moves equivalent to their 'real game' counterpart: Mario hurls fireballs; Kirby sucks foes in and steals their powers; and Pikachu does the 'electric slide' all over his unwary opponents. Of course, the object





is basically 'King of the Mountain,' the favorite sport of high school bullies the world over. Knock your opponents from their perch and score some serious points (think over-the-top ring outs). Naturally you can go the hand-to-hand route, but the only sure way to score a decisive victory is to send your foes to a spiraling end — over and over again.

Like just about everything else Nintendo blesses with their uncanny touch, *SSB* is fabulously addictive. Case in point: initially when the game arrived in office, I scoffed at it. Playing it for ten to fifteen minutes at a time the game slowly sunk its hooks into my psyche. Next thing I know, I'm a babbling idiot, 8 hours later clamoring for more (and this is in the relatively low-key one player contest).

And The Winner by TKO... Nintendo!

Once again Nintendo comes through in style. Sure, the graphics are only OK (no Expansion Pak here), and the game seems amazingly simplistic, but the simple fact of the matter is that simple sells (at least for Nintendo) and this game is good, solid, old-fashioned teeth-breaking fun. Besides, any game that allows you to kick the snot out of Pikachu can't be all bad, can it? **ECM**

Micro Machines 64 Turbo

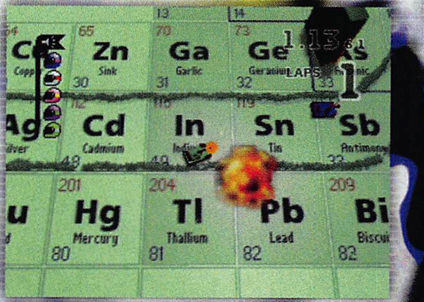
Ah, Micro Machines... Who of you out there doesn't remember them, with their intricately detailed frames, tiny wheels, and countless models? In a word, they were pretty cool [Eggo's note: that's two words]! Remember that fast-mouthed guy in the commercial? Remember when it was still acceptable to spend a few hours playin' with the toys (down with maturity!)? But then you had to go and grow up, and sadly, those toys had to stay with your childhood as you entered corporate America. Heh heh, that's what video games are for!

Actually, Micro Machine games are nothing new, in fact they've been around for about a decade now, although they are sadly no longer 'endorsed' by the Nintendo World Champion, Thor Ackerlund... (sorry, Thor!). From the NES to the Game Gear, these little gems o' joy have always been popular, reaching even cult status here in the States (though they've never been as popular here as they have been on their native UK soil). But after a short dry spell, they're back! If you thought the PS version was it, you ain't seen nothing yet. Well OK, maybe you've seen SOMETHING. Behold, *Micro Machines 64*!

Compared to the PS version, it appears that this one is basically the same. I said "basically." The graphics are nearly the same, but there was a trade-off in the translation department. Unfortunately, these N64 visuals aren't nearly as sharp as the PS one, but the special attacks/effects are definitely better. Even the game's three main vehicles (car, tank and boat) look a bit better. The character portraits to be found here are... well, pretty bland (nothing like those bankable stereotypes!). The sounds... well, I won't even get into those, just rest assured that they're pretty grating.

But the biggest difference would have to be the PS' biggest draw...multi-player! They've slashed it in half... NOOOOO!! Now there's only four players... is that still enough? I want my 8-player free-for-alls back! Admittedly, even with four players, the game's still outrageous, as many a *GF*-night has been lost to *MM*s in the past.

Oh well, even with a few kinks, there's still a fun game to be had here. True, it's not as pristine as the PS version, but it's still fundamentally *Micro Machines*. And that's always a plus. Hey, like anyone out there is gonna complain about ANY version of *MM* (during the drought, many fans were caught playing the GameBoy version, so I don't wanna hear any lip). Take it, play it, love it. You know you will. **ST**











Now you <u>can</u> do it across the dining table!







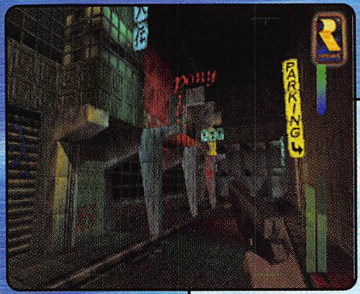
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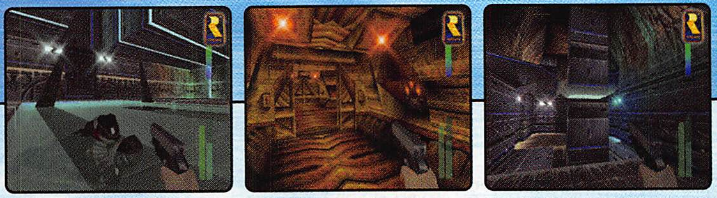
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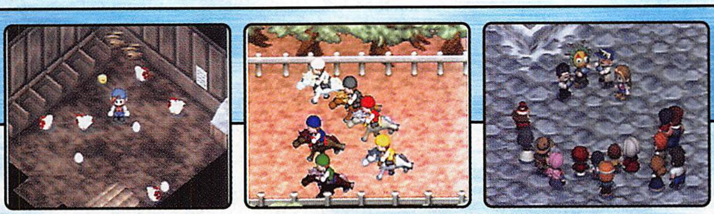


Jet Force Gemini (Rare) — Why oh why can't any other company make the Nintendo 64 sing like Rare can? It might be an overused cliché, but you won't believe that this game is running on the N64. It's lookin' THAT good.

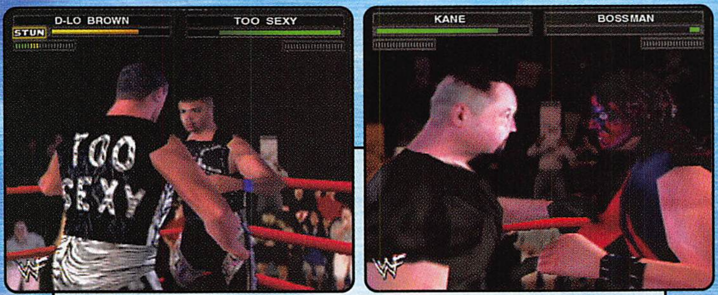




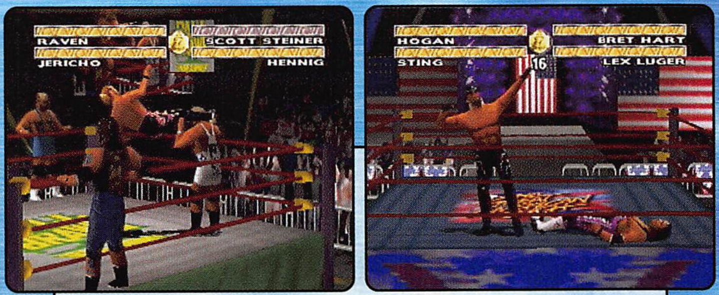

Perfect Dark (Rare) — The long wait for Rare's follow-up to *GoldenEye* is almost over! RAM cart, bigger levels, and best of all — co-op play! This is an N64 game? It can't be... but it is!

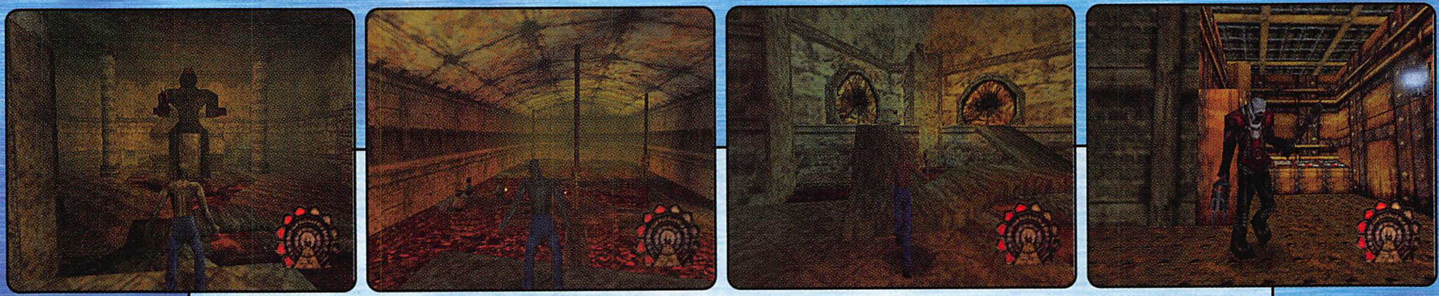

Harvest Moon (Natsume) — One genre that hasn't exactly been overcrowded on the N64 is the RPG. From Natsume we get *Harvest Moon*, a really wacked out RPG about... fishing? And that's only the beginning.



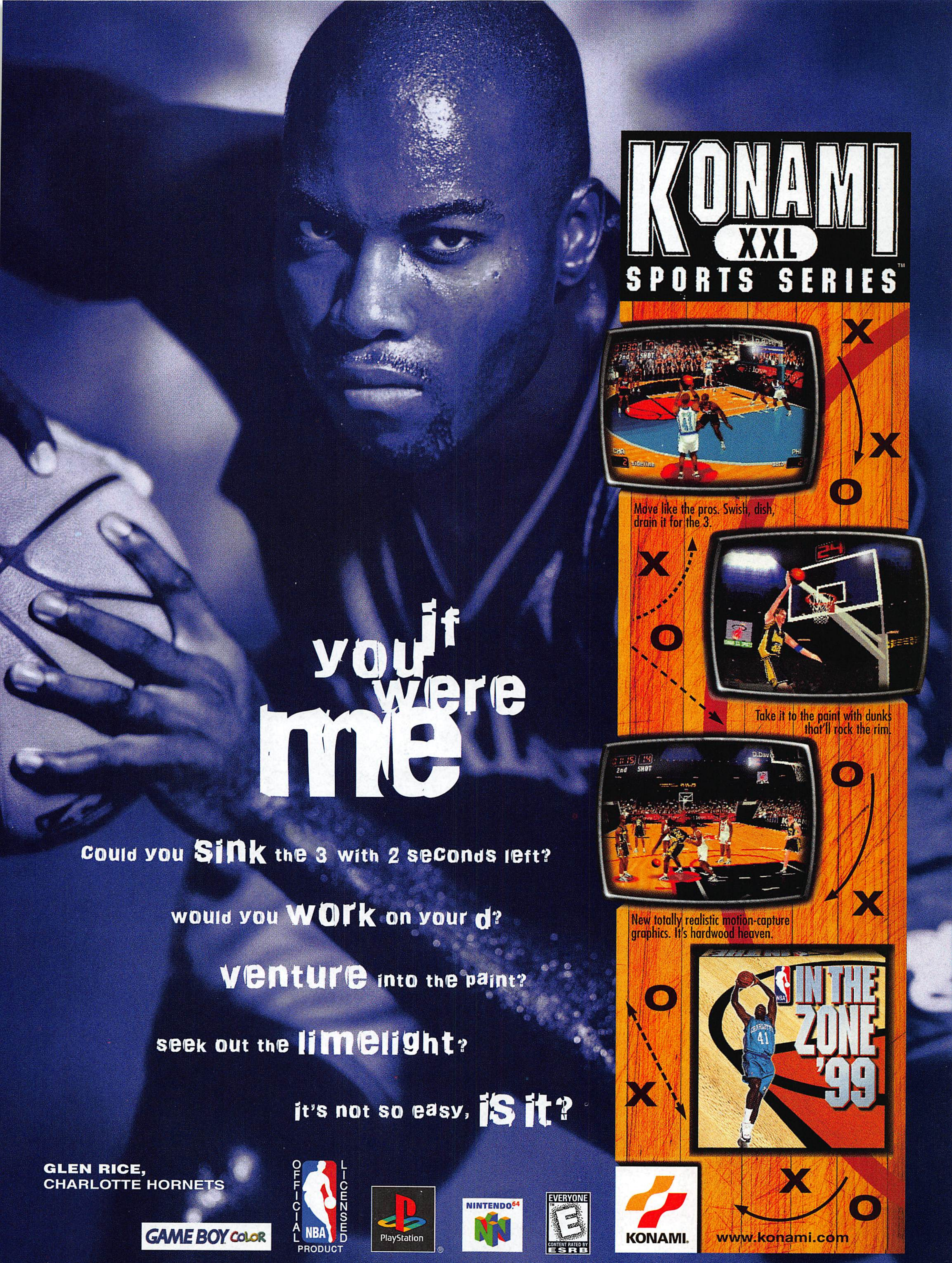
WWF Attitude (Acclaim) — Know your role, and shut your mouth... and let Acclaim educate your monkey ass.



WCW Nitro (THQ) — Whatcha gonna do when the 24" pythons run wild on your Nintendo 64, Brother!?



Shadow Man (Acclaim) — Control the big, bad Voodoo Daddy in this game inspired by the comic book.


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if you were me
could you sink the 3 with 2 seconds left?
would you work on your d?
venture into the paint?
seek out the limelight?
it's not so easy, is it?
GLEN RICE,
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"KAIN SHALL TASTE MY VENGEANCE..."






At last year's E3, one of the most anticipated games shown was *Legacy Of Kain: Soul Reaver*, the long-awaited sequel to Crystal Dynamics' sleeper-hit *Blood Omen: Legacy Of Kain*. And while I was unable to attend last year's gaming expo in Atlanta (someone had to hang back and baby-sit the tumbleweeds in Agoura), my fellow *GF* editors returned home from their romp in gaming heaven <sigh> with not only stacks of cool press kits and gaming chicken (where's my *Tomb Raider* watch?) but also dozens of exciting stories to wow this lone editor. So who saw the Dreamcast?!

Well, after I managed to back Kid Fan and ECM into a corner (man, that's a big corner!), and forced them to give up the goods on the DC, it was time to get the verdict on *Soul Reaver*. Could Crystal Dynamics' morbid sequel possibly capture the eerie intensity that the first *Kain* so masterfully delivered? Although extremely early, the word back then was that *SR* easily maintained the Jeffrey Dahmer-like mood and level design you've come to expect from the demented minds at Crystal Dynamics!



"NONE SHALL STOP ME!"

Now, fast forward six months later, and you'll not only find the *GF* crew sportin' some brand spankin' new office space (what the hell is a DeSoto, anyway?), but, with the help of our newly-appointed third party man, The Judge, we've also managed to secure some pretty killer new ROMs, including the latest rev of *Soul Reaver*! Realize, of course, that this is the first time I've actually seen *SR* in person so you can imagine my sheer anticipation [cue the *Rocky* theme song]!

Although still early, the *SR* rev we received basically showcased the various levels in the game and some pretty creepy enemies. Many of the monsters have yet to be ani-

DEVELOPER - CRYSTAL DYNAMICS | PUBLISHER - EIDOS INTERACTIVE | 1 PLAYERS | AVAILABLE MAY 25

mated, and at this point all you can really do is explore the different environments... and at times, slay a few bad guys... Oh, and suck their souls of course. After all, this is Kain we're talking about! "Væ-victis!" And how awesome does Raziel look, brandishing a magical sword that wraps around his arm like a vine?! Very original, very dark, and most importantly... very much Kain!

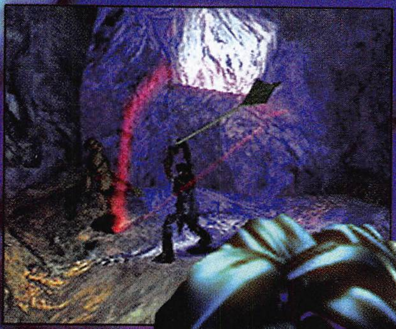
As the game starts off, you'll be treated to a short intro, which uses in-game graphics (like *MGS*) rather than traditional rendered computer graphics. While I'm definitely a huge fan of gorgeous CG (say what you will about *FF8*, but the cinemas in that game will make you cry), this particular delivery manages to produce a more cohesive feel to the game.

The most impressive aspect of *Soul Reaver* is the enormity of the levels... gigantic! These levels are HUGE and lovingly complimented by a rather morbid soundtrack, including plenty of freakish moans and howls straight out of a *Hellraiser* film! Also, the control on Raziel was amazing. In fact, this is one of the first PS games that I've actually opted to use the analog controller over the D-Pad (what can I say, old habits die-hard!). When the game is finally released, *SR* is supposed to include a number of role-playing elements, and of course the main focus will inevitably lie with exploration.

Soul Reaver might have a long way to go before it hits the shelves, but you can rest assured, when completed it's going to be one of the biggest PS games this year. Fill up on holy water, invest in silver, and get ready to pray for dawn 'cause Kain's making his return and you're as good as dead... meat! **F**

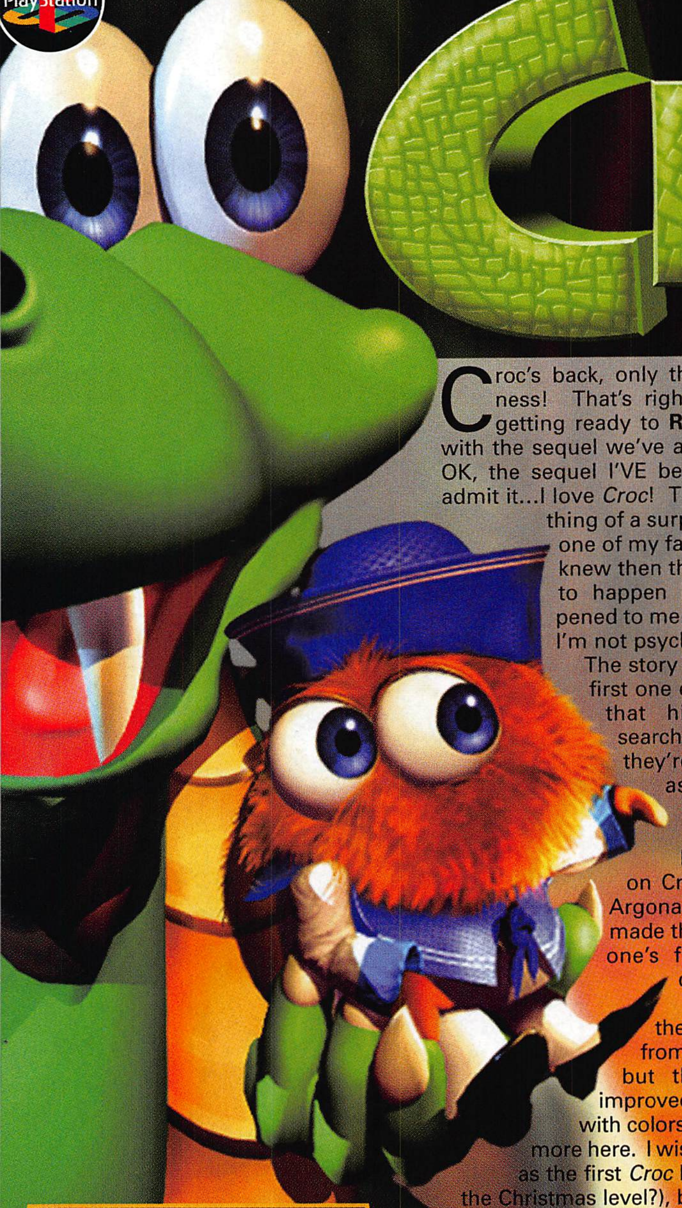








Croc 2



Croc's back, only this time he means business! That's right folks, Fox Interactive's getting ready to **Rock** the **Croc** this Spring with the sequel we've all been waiting for. Well OK, the sequel I'VE been waiting for. Hey, I'll admit it...I love *Croc*! This might come as something of a surprise, but the original was one of my favorite games of '97, and I knew then that a sequel was destined to happen (actually, they just happened to mention it in the manual...so I'm not psychic, sue me).

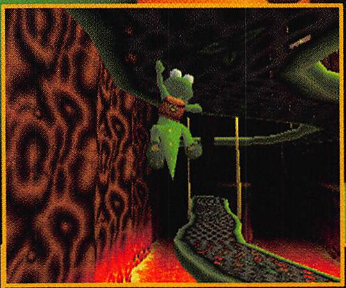


The story takes place right after the first one ended, with Croc learning that his parents have been searching for him. Only thing is, they're not on the same island as his adopted family, those lovable Gobbos. To make matters worse, the Evil Dante has been revived somehow, and he's itching to get some revenge-action on Croc's tail. Looks like another ingenious, Argonaut-developed (you know these guys, they made the original *StarFox*!) adventure for everyone's favorite backpack-wearin', one-toothed crocodile. Can you feel the love?



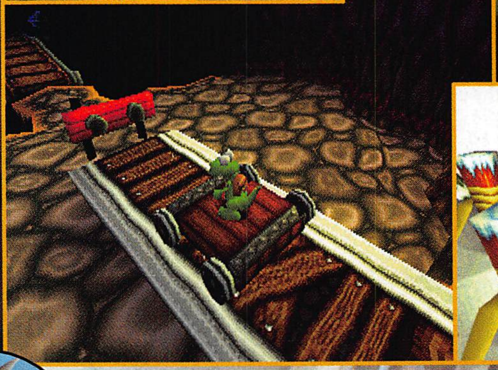
So far, the levels are MUCH bigger than the original (tiny levels were my only gripe from the first), so that's a plus. Not only that, but the the colors have been noticeably improved...not like the first one had a problem with colors, it's just that there are certainly quite a bit more here. I wish I could give the thumbs up to the music, as the first *Croc* had one incredible soundtrack (remember the Christmas level?), but alas, our preview disc contained none. But thankfully, the sound effects were in, and just hearing Croc bleat out an enthusiastic "Ker-Splat!" again made my day...it's just so, so...cute. At least that much hasn't changed!





Croc retains all his old moves from the original, but as good sequels go he's acquired a few new ones. His tail whip is now more powerful, but also hits higher. Plus, he's also got a new power-flip, a new hanging kick, and in the spirit of all things Mario, a higher butt-bounce attack (Croc redefines the words bubble-butt). Plus, those loveable Gobbo things are back, and this time they're themed, baby! That's right, Argonaut took the challenge and found even more new ways to dress up those cotton-ball inspired fluff bags!







Croc 2 is due out this spring, so the wait's nearly over! In fact, by the time you read this it may already be on the shelves...if that's the case, you know what to do. C'mon, go out and play *Croc*...it'll make ya happy! **ST**



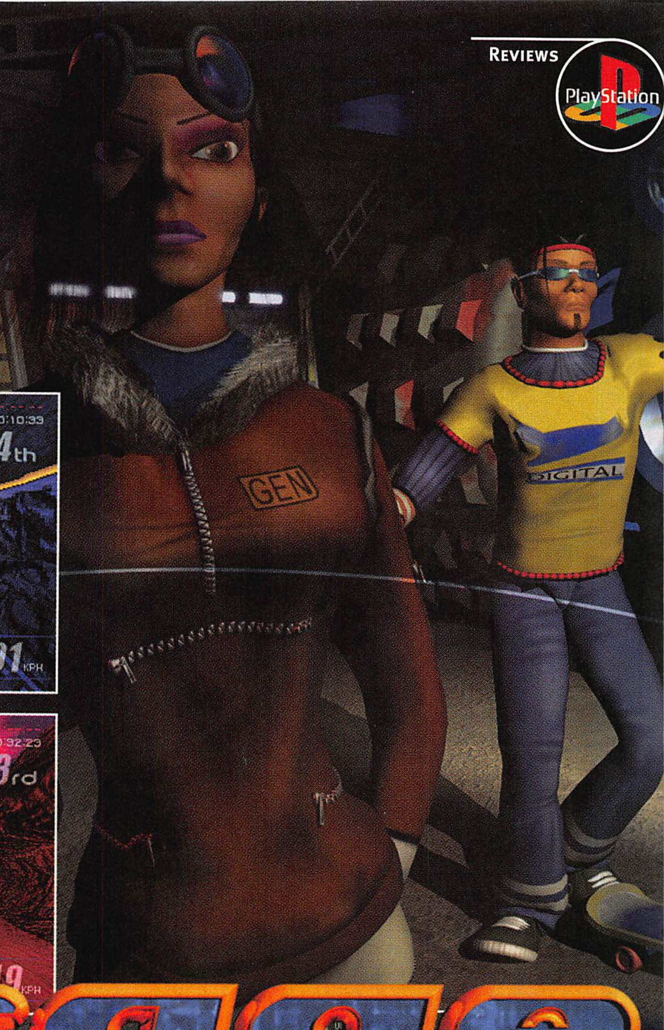
SUPER TEETER: THEMED GOBBOS? OH, BROTHER...

DEVELOPER - ARGONAUT
PUBLISHER - FOX INTERACTIVE

1 PLAYERS
AVAILABLE 2ND QTR.

Have you ever wished that your favorite racers allowed you to literally drive anywhere, even upside down? That's right, why limit yourself to just tearing it up on a conventional track? ...BORING! Enter *Rollcage*, Psygnosis's newest racer that says "So long!" to physical limitations and immerses players in a true 360-degree racing experience!

While at first I found the concept of racing with no limitations interesting (feel free to crash and burn as much as you like, 'cause you're indestructible!), I ended up spending more time focusing on trying to stay on the course, rather than driving upside-down or on the side of walls. That, however, would not last long, as the fierce competition forced me to take to the high road (tunnel ceilings) to avoid getting blasted by one of the eight available weapons, including homing missiles and time warps. But it was the control (or in this case, lack thereof) of the cars that had me wishing the guys from AM3 were around to make a few small adjustments... hey, who replaced my PlayStation with a Dreamcast (wait, that's a good thing!)?

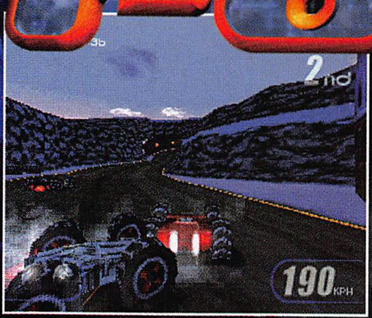






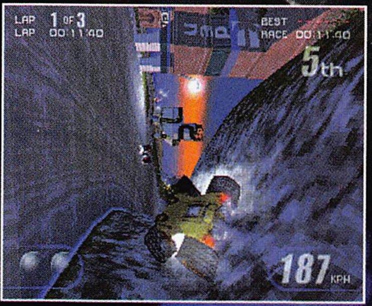


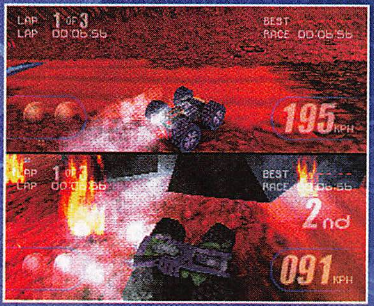
rollcage



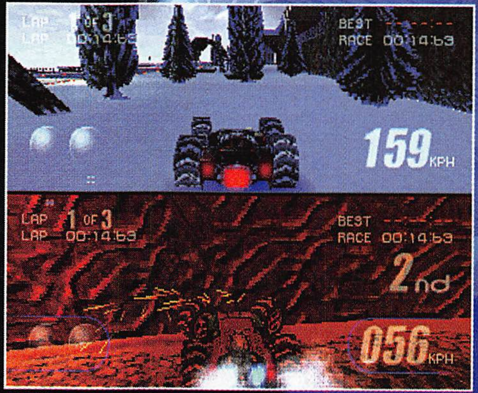


Like most Psygnosis games, the graphics in *Rollcage* are sharp and extremely colorful. Also, I was very impressed with the weapon and lighting effects found on most of the 20 available tracks in the game. You really have to give it up to the developers of *Rollcage* for creating an almost pop-up free environment, as most racers fall victim to large amounts of draw-in death (alas, even my beloved *Rally 2*). And while *RC* might not run at 60 frames, it does manage to deliver the same sensation of blistering speed found in a few of the more renowned racers such as *R4* and *Rally 2*.





Another unique feature in *Rollcage* is your ability to interact with your environment by destroying particular structures to slow down your competitors. Finally, if your peers are still doubting your crazy *RC* skills (Hi-Fi, you're going down!), then perhaps it's time to prove your might in split-screen action, complete with four unique multi-player tracks!





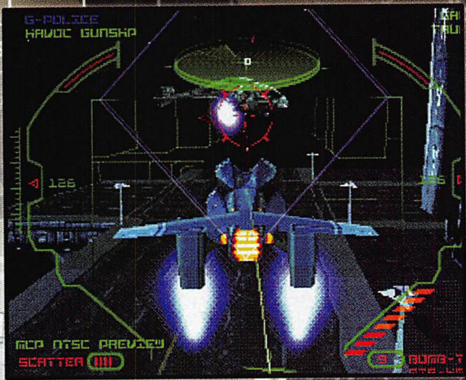
While '98 saw plenty of action in the racing genre (what was that game called again... *Gran*-something?) and '99 will undoubtedly follow suit with *R4* and *Turismo 2*, none of these titles allows you to race upside-down (I think that's a selling point)! So, if you're like me and refuse to be limited by silly physics (Einstein who?), then *RC* is definitely your game... besides, you ain't borrowing my copy of *Rally 2*! **F**

VIEWPOINT SCORE	DEVELOPER / PUBLISHER	PLAYERS / AVAILABILITY	FURY
:84	DEVELOPER - ATD PUBLISHER - PSYGNOSIS	1-2 PLAYERS AVAILABLE NOW	FURY: LIFE AFTER RALLY 2?



G-POLICE
WEAPONS OF JUSTICE





What's this, another game by Psygnosis... and you say it's a sequel, huh? Well, that's a real surprise. In the world of video games, you can always count on two things: 1) If a game was even remotely successful you can pretty much guarantee that a sequel is already in the works. 2) One out of every five games released is either a Psynosis or an EA game. That, my friends, is the sad truth about an industry that is fast becoming too big for its own good (originality is quickly fading from view!).

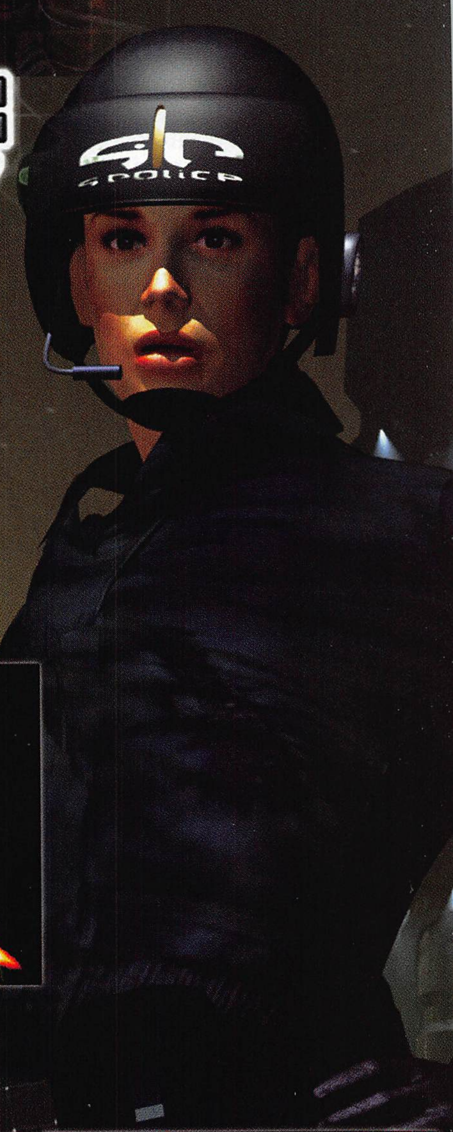
I apologize for my brief rant, but at times it's tough to remain enthusiastic about mediocre games. And say what you will, but that's what I found the first *G-Police* to be... decent but by no means great. The sequel, *G-Police Weapons of Justice* is heading to the PS, and from what I've seen so far, this is really the same game with the addition of new levels and more vehicles. To fans of the first *G-Police* however, I'm quite certain you'll find yourselves right at home with *Weapons of Justice,* as it captures the same look and feel of the first game.

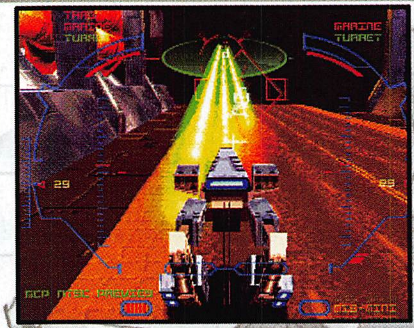


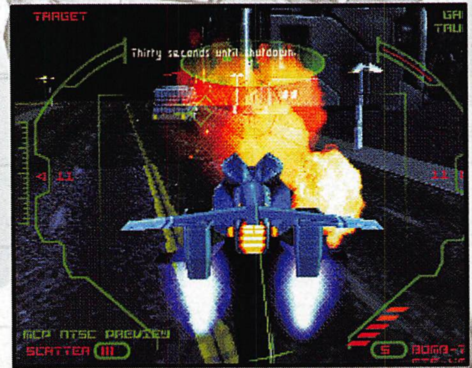
The story leading to the sequel basically starts off 10 days after *GP1* ended. Although the Nanosoft cruiser has been destroyed, a number of rebel fighters have taken to the city streets, lending their evil ways to the local gangs on Callisto. As the situation begins to get out of hand, a squadron of Marines has been sent in to lend a hand to the G-Police. All seems well at first, but then something goes terribly wrong and it's up to you to bring order and restore peace to the land once again (don't you just love sequels?!).

The main attraction in *GP2* is the new vehicles. The first is called a Raptor, which is basically the ED-209 of the *G-Police* world and is probably the coolest feature in the game. Also, you have the opportunity to drive around a police car on the city streets and pilot a spacecraft-type vehicle known as a Corsair. This time around, the missions are longer and from what I've seen, more challenging.

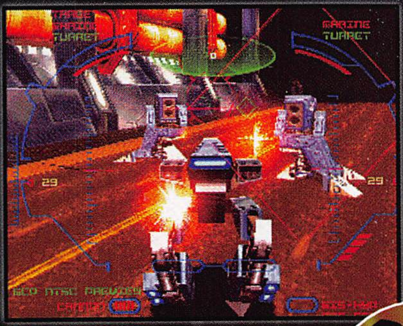
G-Police Weapons of Justice, while early, is definitely shaping up to be more of what fans of the series would expect in a sequel. Get ready to exact a bit of police brutality in the near future and until then... RESPECT MY AUTHORITA!! **F**











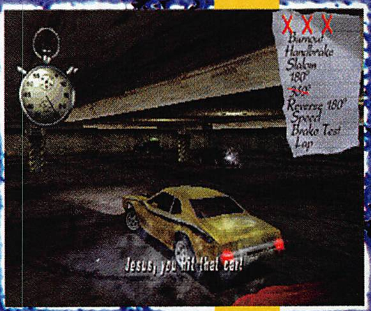


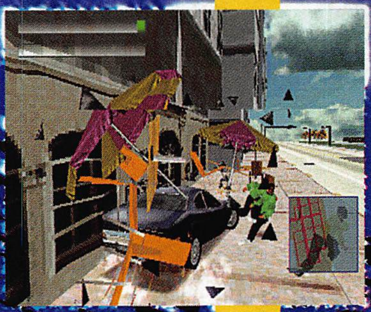
DRIVER

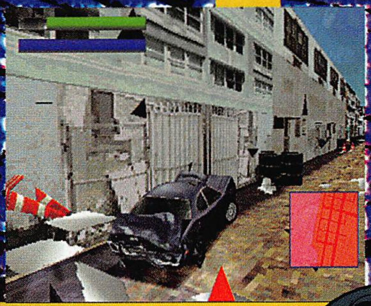














Rolling out of bed with a hangover, you spot a flash of red from the corner of your eye. Fumbling around half-awake, your finger finally finds the play button. It's a single message and the voice is muffled: "It's us! So listen... we wanna use you on a bank job. No hassles. Should be **real** sleepy. You want in?" In an instant, you grab your keys and stumble out the door. Here's your chance... After all those years of cop training... And now, your first job... Better not blow it!

Welcome to GT Interactive's *Driver*, a crim(inal) sim which puts you in the gloves of Tanner, an undercover cop trying to infiltrate the Underworld as a Wheelman for hire. The timeframe is the '70s and muscle cars abound. Game themes are similar to Take 2's *Grand Theft Auto*, with missions consisting of dirty deeds such as: driving a getaway car for bank robbers, escorting a hood to a destination, or dealing with a stolen vehicle.

Move over GTA... there's a new bad boy in town!

So far, the game is half done, but only one of the promised four cities (Los Angeles, Miami, San Francisco, and New York) is really playable. The layout of the cities is supposed to be accurate and detailed, since the programmers went to the cities and took notes on the streets, landmarks, and topography (nothing like doin' 80 on the hilly streets of San Fran!). Reflections, the creators of *Destruction Derby*, are the programmers behind this one, so you can expect realistic physics, lots of collisions, and flying hubcaps!

Did you enjoy the car scenes in *Ronin*? What about the long chase in *The Rock*? Well if you're a fan of adrenaline-pumping chases like those, *Driver* gives you a chance to record your exploits with Director's Mode. Choreograph your own scene... picture it... film a corner as your muscle car barrels around it; place a still-cam on the ground as you and trailing cops jump a camera while cresting a hill; or capture some innocents peacefully sipping tea right before two cars barrel through the sidewalk cafe. The possibilities are endless... And once your masterpiece is finished, save it to memory card, and submit it to Hollywood... then just sit back and wait for the movie offers to pour in.

Driver is definitely showing a lot of potential in its early stages. There's a ton of game modes to mess around with in addition to the standard game: pursuit (where it's up to you to chase down and ram a guy off the road), getaway (ditch the tails behind ya), checkpoint (get from pt A to pt B to pt Z, etc.), survival mode (last as long as you can against a pig caravan a la O.J.), and more. Hopefully, by July, Reflections will be able to bring it all together cuz there's a lot goin' on here. **E**

DEVELOPER - REFLECTIONS	1 PLAYER	EGGO: WHERE TO
PUBLISHER - GT INTERACTIVE	AVAILABLE JULY	NOW, MISS DAISY?





R4™

RIDGE RACER TYPE 4

Years from now, when the mighty PlayStation has finally been laid to rest and its impact evaluated, I imagine that only a small handful of games (and their sequels) would be considered truly instrumental in the system's success. You've got your *Tekkens*, then there are the *Tomb Raiders*, the *Crash* games, and of course we can't forget *Resident Evil*. But aren't we missing one? Ah yes, *Ridge Racer*!

With their latest *RR* sequel (and some say last) on the PS, Namco completely outdoes themselves with what has to be the most sophisticated racing game of all time. In the past, they've been happy with creating amazing, incredibly entertaining racers that everyone (well, nearly everyone) loved. But then *Gran Turismo* came along and changed everything. What's left when you've exhausted a system's potential? It's time to go Real.

Ridge Racer Type 4 is an odd mix of games. It's fairly realistic in that depending on which team you choose to go with (there are four initially), there's completely different stories to go along with 'em. Place different positions on the tracks, and you'll get different responses based on how you've done. It's pretty eerie, but very cool. But is *R4*'s brand of "realism" enough to keep you away from the King Daddy of PS racers, *Gran Turismo*? Well, sort of.

The graphics, as much as I'd love to say nicer things, are pretty good. Not exactly *Turismo*-quality (especially in the somewhat grainy replays), but very good nonetheless. Like I mentioned above, *Turismo* pushed the PS in so many ways, I'd be surprised to see anything ever top it (drastically top it, anyway). Plus, not to sound jaded or anything, but having witnessed graphic-power racing in some of the newer systems, even I have to admit that grainy graphics are getting a bit stale. But what *R4*'s visuals lack in punch, they make up for in style. Taillights now leave a reddish glow in the darker tunnels, the backgrounds all seem expertly detailed, and best of all, the game's fast. VERY fast (faster than *Turismo*-fast!). Nice touches, but I fear that others may not be as generous as I am...

 | SUPER TEETER: THE "R" STANDS FOR *RAVE*! | DEVELOPER - NAMCO
PUBLISHER - NAMCO | 1-2 PLAYERS
AVAILABLE MAY

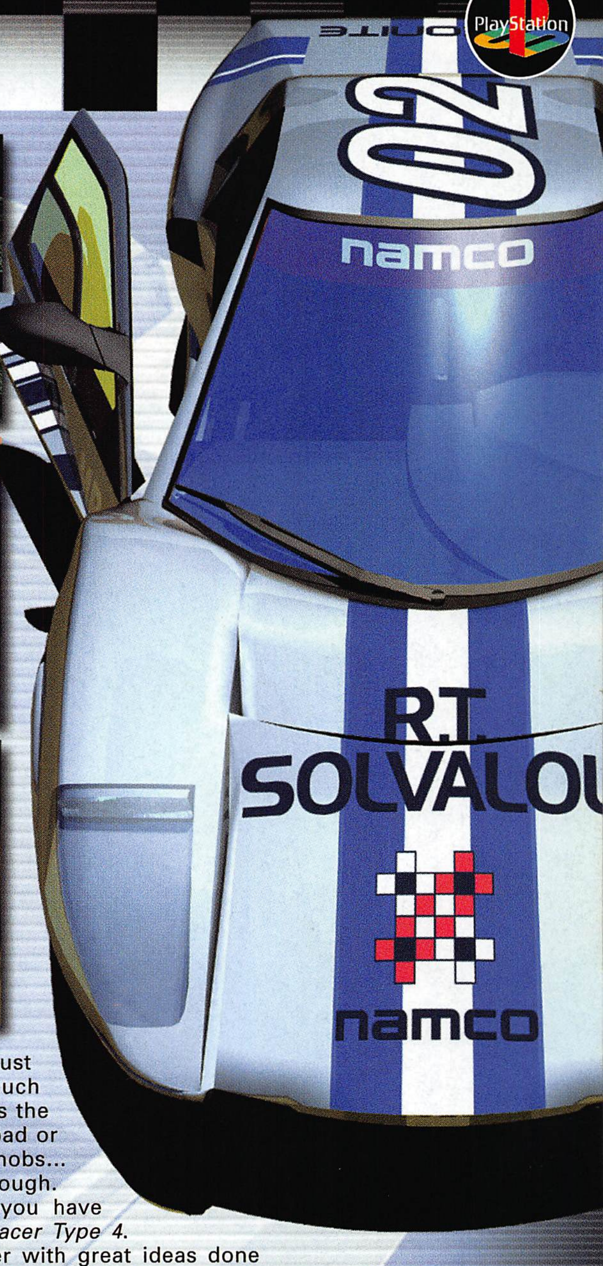












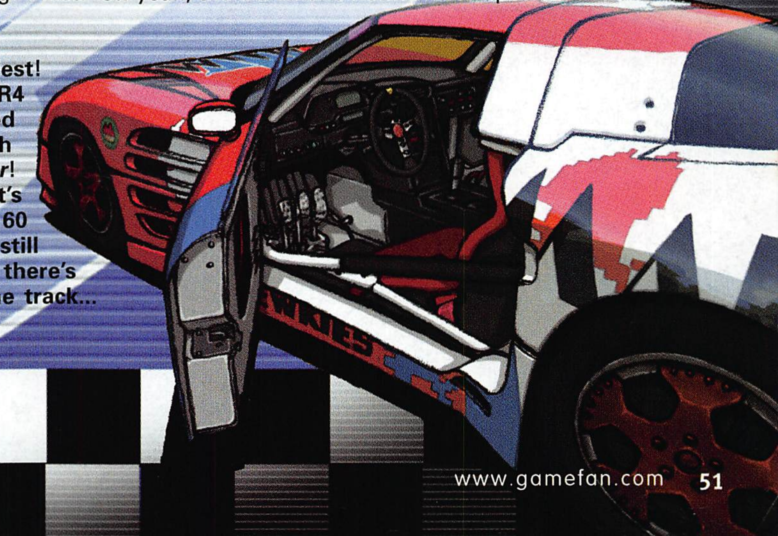
The music's a strange, strange mixture of different styles. For the most part, I didn't really care for it that much, which might puzzle some people. Always a staunch supporter of the techno revolution, I'm always looking for another soundtrack to add to my growing-all-the-time game music library, but this wasn't it. Don't get me wrong, I don't think the music is bad at all, it's just not for me. In fact, a few of the guys here at the office already own the soundtrack, and these are people who normally don't 'do' the game music thing. It's very alternative, which means that most of you out there should dig it. OK, OK... I'll admit it, I enjoyed a track or two (that whole *Ridge Racer* song gets annoying really, really fast). Just play the game with the volume turned really high... it's just like a disco, without the polyester!

Whenever a Japanese game pops up over here in the States, certain changes from the original are inevitable. But Namco's done something that's cooler than cool... they actually improved the control over the Japanese version! Yep, that's right. The U.S. version of *R4* now uses the glorious Dual Shock pad, complete with the heavenly analog sticks o' joy! This might not seem like such a big deal to some of you out there, but trust me, it makes a difference! I always figured the reason that Namco passed on DS compatibility for the Japanese market was to help their own 'alternative' controller, the Jogcon. For those of you ignorant of the Jogcon (how I envy you...), it's Namco's newest racing-controller (after the Negcon). A small wheel is where the Nintendo 64 analog stick would be, in the middle. There's a notch for your thumb, and control is handled by turning the wheel left/right. The catch is that the wheel will actually offer resistance when needed (much like Microsoft's Force Feedback stick for the PC). No offense, Namco, but that thing blows... it just isn't as much fun to use as the standard d-pad or the analog knobs... cool idea, though.

So there you have it... *Ridge Racer Type 4*. A great racer with great ideas done very, very well. Besides, it's the only serious alternative to *Gran Turismo*, and even then, it exceeds that monster in some ways. With over 300 cars, a ton of tracks, hidden secrets (can you find *Pac-Man*?) as well as the 'rumored' link-up mode, what more could you ask for? PlayStation racers aren't going to get much better than this, so I do recommend that you enjoy 'em while they last. Oh yeah, the CG chick's hot... Namco power! **ST**



Namco is just the coolest! Packed in with every RR4 game is a new, pumped up version of the smash PS hit, *Ridge Racer*! Pumped up in now it's running at a blistering 60 FPS!! Of course, it's still only one track, and there's only 1 other car on the track... still, it's FREE!



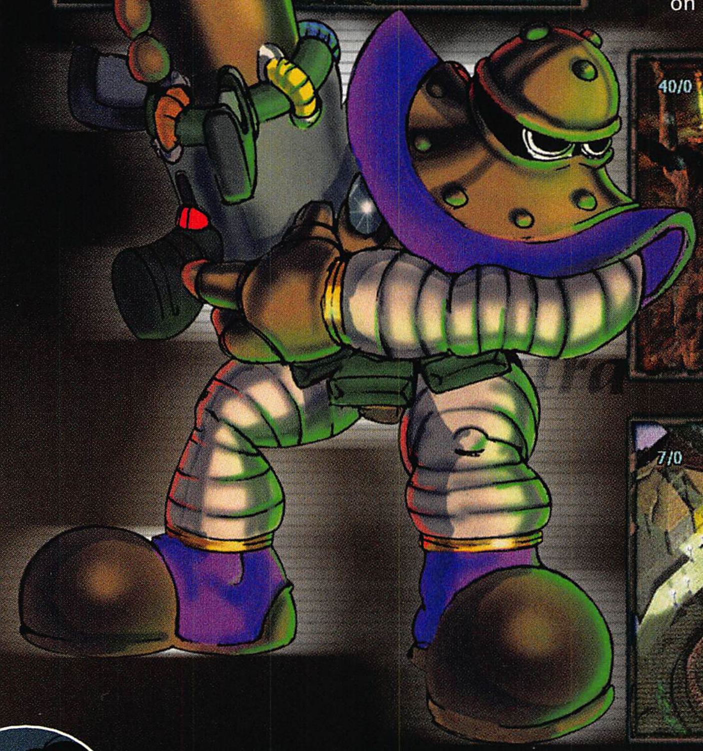


SHADOW MADNESS









Ahh!! I can't believe I'm saying this... *Shadow... Madness...* <ack>... is... N... N, <breaking into tears> NOT bad. I had this perfect review already written in my head, ready to unload on the game for being a *Final Fantasy VII* clone and nothing more. <sigh> But it looks like I'll have to save the editorial hurt for another game and put a positive spin on this review because I actually found myself enjoying *Shadow Madness*. It's sick, it's twisted, it's incomprehensible... how a Square-head like me would accept a game like *Shadow Madness* into the domain of RPGs with open arms ("Come on in! There's plenty of room!").

So where do I start? How 'bout story — a classic strong point of tradition al RPGs... Well, *Shadow Madness* cer tainly delivers in this category. Te Woolsey (author of the English version of *Final Fantasy II, III,* and *Crono Trigger* is the executive producer of *Shado Madness*, and he weaves a gripping tal here, in the classic-RPG vein. There' plenty of cheesy humor, character per sonality (albeit mostly one-dimensional and conflict. The premise of the game i that a mysterious plague is spreadin across the land, driving people insan with its very touch (kinda like ECM on Monday morning). To make matter worse, three towns have been completel vaporized, leaving our three main charac ters without a roof or family to return What's a homeless, friendless, brok adventurer to do but band together wit other survivors to spread the word abou the impending doom that awaits the res of the world? Story is a definite stron point for *SM*... though the script is a bi on the wacky side, filled with witty bante among the characters (provided you ca stomach that kind of humor).





What's next? Let's tackle music. It' inevitable that I compare this game t *Final Fantasy VII* or *VIII* because those ar the only other RPGs that are like this — visually and gameplay-wise. Believe it o not, *Shadow Madness* holds its own against the 32-bit *FFs* in the music depart ment. The symphonies aren't Nobu Uematsu-inspired, but they're still ver good. Definitely in the same class.

You want depth? You want mini-games? You want side-quests? *Shadow Madnes* has got all of that! The game is pretty lin ear, but talk to a person in this town an she'll ask you to hand-deliver a messag to a secret lover across town. There's shop owner in Karillon who offers to se you his item store for 5000 gold. Buy i from him and the sign of the sho changes to your name. I can't wait till

EGGO: Stop the madness!!! | Developer - Craveyard | Publisher - Crave Entertainment | 1 Player | Available Now | Viewpoint Score :83

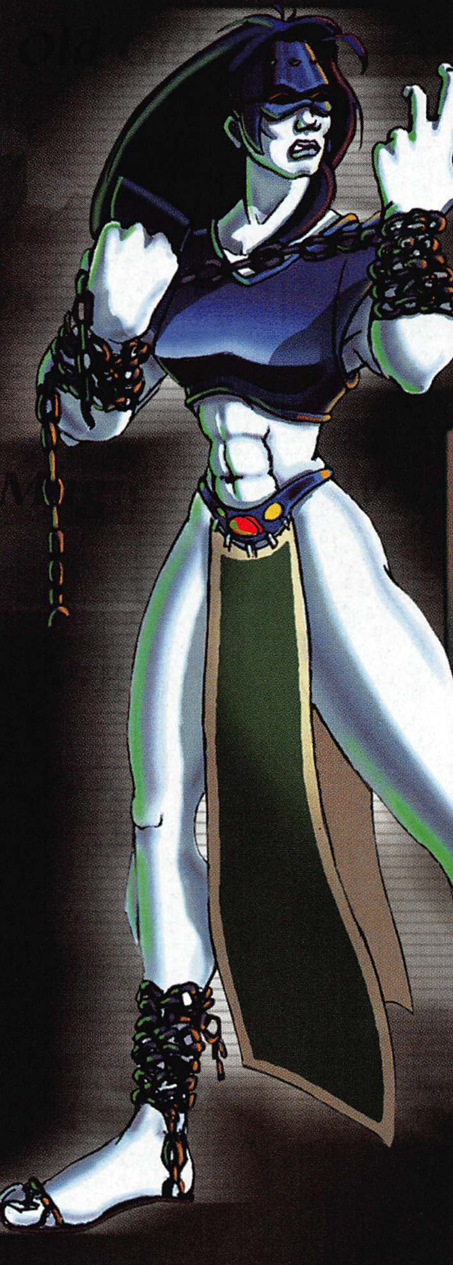






return to the town later to see how my shop's doing. Lockpicking is just one of the many mini-games here as well. In it, you memorize a sequence of moves to pick a lock. Kinda like Simon Says with a locked door on the line.

Now let's get to the part that elicits the groans — the visuals. Graphically, *Shadow Madness* does everything *Final Fantasy VII* did... but worse. The characters are super-deformed, gouraud-shaded, polygonal entities which walk around on 2D, pre-rendered backgrounds in search of items and doorways (a la *FF7* or *Resident Evil*). The characters and backgrounds are an eyesore compared to *Final Fantasy VII* and *VIII*, which show you what a multi-million dollar budget and the PlayStation are capable of. Although, if I had never played either of those, I would enjoy *SM's* graphics a lot more.



There are FMV cut-scenes in this game, which are designed to be a treat and make certain scenes more awe-inspiring. However, the CG in *Shadow Madness* is far from wonderful... it's more like Saturn-quality. Considering this is a PlayStation game, that is **not** good. Namco, Square, Konami have all proven that they can produce excellent CG for Sony's movie-monster, but Crave has a long way to go before they're considered a contender in this area.

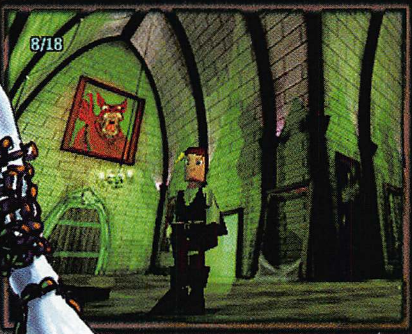
Perhaps the area where *Shadow Madness* hurts the most is the battles. While the *Final Fantasy*s had a dynamic camera, which would pan around the fight and cover the action from multiple, dramatic camera angles, *Shadow Madness'* cameraman is pretty lazy. He'll move maybe once or twice a fight, and occasionally, the angle will be incredibly poor... to the point that you can't select a specific enemy to attack because they're all clumped next to each other.



Thankfully, there **is** something to the fighting in *Shadow Madness*. Random encounters can be avoided by ducking in dungeons (hold L2 and R2 at the same time). Using this, you can 'dodge' more than half the random encounters if you haven't got time for the pain. Unfortunately, you'll need to do your fair share of fighting, because this game will murder you if your characters aren't leveled up (as a true RPG should!). In the battles themselves, you've got options. Choose a defensive stance, a normal attack, or an aggressive swing... Maneuver around an enemy to hit their blind side, jockeying for position... Or enchant your weapons with properties like ice, flame, or spirit. It's far from your average hack and slash.



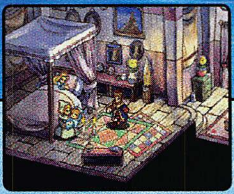
So when you boil it all down, here's the bottom line: *Shadow Madness* is an ugly game. It's definitely not a pretty sight compared to Square's older sisters... but *SM* makes up for it with personality (or should I say story)! If you can get over the sub-par visuals and if you're not playing the import of *Final Fantasy VIII* right now, then you'll want to take *Shadow Madness* out for a spin. Who knows? You might be like me and become a convert. ...Now where's my localized copy of *FF8*? <drool>... **E**

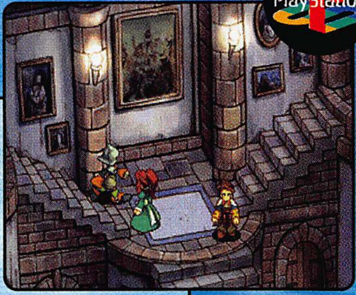




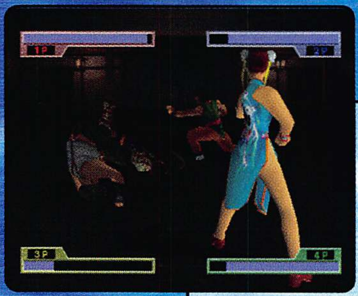
COMING SOON

COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON

Saga Frontier 2 (Square EA) — 2D lives! Call it hip, call it retro, call it the way things were meant to be. Square returns to its hand-drawn roots with an RPG whose art is reminiscent of *Where the Wild Things Are*. What a sequel!







Shaolin (THQ) — What's this? Another 3D fighter for the PS? Actually, *Shaolin* is looking very impressive so far, but only time will tell if it smacks with grace or is relegated to the trash heap.







D.I.R.T. (Funcom Dublin Ltd.) — Motocross never looked so good! 72 tracks to race, jump, and perform tricks on, with selectable weather conditions and two-player racing. I bet you never thought you'd want to play *D.I.R.T.*, but now you will!





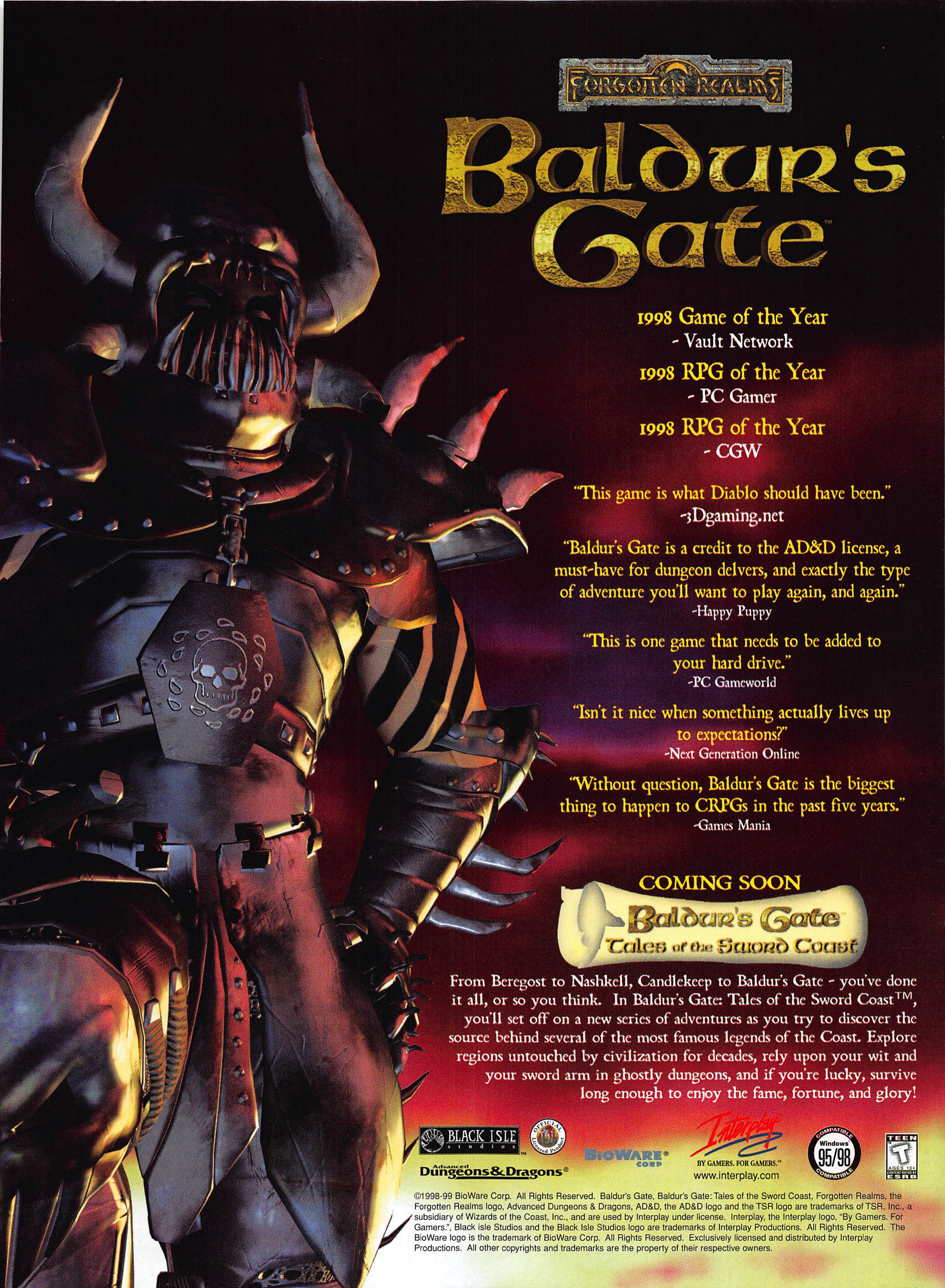


Dino Crisis (Capcom) — This is it... This is the big one. From the creators of *Resident Evil* comes more survival horror... but with dinosaurs! Is there anyone out there who ISN'T excited?






Shadow Man (Acclaim) — Yet another 3rd Person action adventure for the PS. Actually, like the N64 version, this one's from the creators of the *Turok* series, so our hopes are that much higher. Voodoo madness!



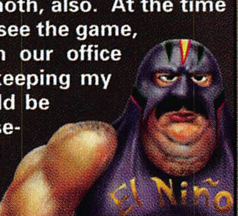
Forgotten Realms
Baldur's Gate™
1998 Game of the Year
- Vault Network
1998 RPG of the Year
- PC Gamer
1998 RPG of the Year
- CGW
"This game is what Diablo should have been."
-3Dgaming.net
"Baldur's Gate is a credit to the AD&D license, a must-have for dungeon delvers, and exactly the type of adventure you'll want to play again, and again."
-Happy Puppy
"This is one game that needs to be added to your hard drive."
-PC Gameworld
"Isn't it nice when something actually lives up to expectations?"
-Next Generation Online
"Without question, Baldur's Gate is the biggest thing to happen to CRPGs in the past five years."
-Games Mania
COMING SOON
Baldur's Gate™
Tales of the Sword Coast
From Beregost to Nashkell, Candlekeep to Baldur's Gate - you've done it all, or so you think. In Baldur's Gate: Tales of the Sword Coast™, you'll set off on a new series of adventures as you try to discover the source behind several of the most famous legends of the Coast. Explore regions untouched by civilization for decades, rely upon your wit and your sword arm in ghostly dungeons, and if you're lucky, survive long enough to enjoy the fame, fortune, and glory!
BLACK ISLE studios™
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GameFan Sports

O.K., it's time to admit to myself that the Celtics will not make that great leap to the .500 club, this year. Even with the addition of Pierce and Battie, we still can't put it together, and my call for post-season Green dies away. It's time to concentrate on baseball...

...Aaaaargh! Roger Clemens on the Yankees. Oh Mephistopheles, Lord of Nether Region, wasn't the Curse of the Bambino enough for you? Couldn't the pain stop there? Now you go and take Roger, *our* Roger, and put him in pinstripes. It was bad enough he played in Canada, but on the Yankees!? I guess the Bruins making the play-offs will have to suffice.

This month we look at the three big guns, in the baseball sim department. You'll see that everyone's a winner, this year, and the future looks bright, because the Dark Horse, Interplay's *Baseball 2000*, is another dandy due out later. Those of you that are Griffey fans will have to wait until next moth, also. At the time I write this, I have yet to see the game, but Nintendo will be in our office later this week, so I'm keeping my fingers crossed. It would be cool to see all of the baseball titles shine in '99. I hate bashing games (wink). ***El Niño***



A major success. *TP2000* is everything you could want in a baseball sim. Solid graphics, excellent AI, good gameplay and commentary that actually adds to the experience. The downward spiral that was the *Triple Play* franchise is no more. I may just make it through a whole season, this year...

G	C	P	M	O	
8	8	9	9	8	90



Triple Play 2000
PlayStation
EA Sports

It doesn't look as good as Acclaim's *All Star Baseball 2000*, but we aren't talking about a date for the prom here; we are talking baseball. Like poster boy, Swingin' Sammy Sosa, *Triple Play 2000* is the total baseball package. The clear winner of the PlayStation baseball battle, this year.

G	C	P	M	O	
8	8	9	8	8	88

More of an arcade experience than *TP*, *MLB 2000* has the kind of graphics and playability that make a good game, but lacks the AI to compete as a top-notch sim. Too many mental errors held over from last year's title, make it hard for me to appreciate the overall product.

G	C	P	M	O	
7	8	8	8	5	86



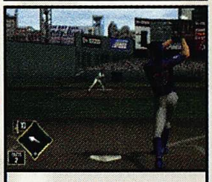
MLB 2000
PlayStation
989 Studios

Like El Niño said, too many carry-over mistakes. The baserunning is so annoying, it makes me want to throw my controller. The graphics and sound are better, though, so casual fans will still draw a great deal of enjoyment, nonetheless. Hard core fans will want to stick with *TP 2000*.

G	C	P	M	O	
8	7	7	8	6	85

This is the quintessential Nintendo sports game, eclipsing all other titles and genres. The best graphics on a home console, coupled with addictive gameplay and exemplary AI make this a must have. Did I mention the uncharacteristically good sound and commentary?

G	C	P	M	O	
10	8	8	7	7	91



ASB 2000
Nintendo 64
Acclaim

Griffey can start sweating now. With graphics, sound and gameplay like this, I find it hard to believe that another baseball sim could even come close in overall quality or enjoyment. This is a must-have if you are a Nintendo 64 owner — even if you aren't a fan of baseball... it's just that good!

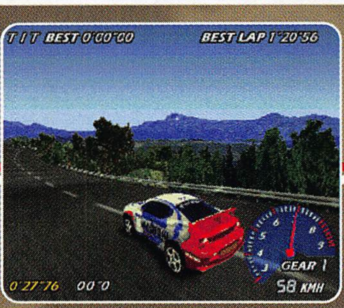
G	C	P	M	O	
10	8	9	7	7	90

V-Rally

P Preview

Developer: EA
Publisher: EA
Available: Opening Day
of Players: 1-2





You can have your NASCAR and Formula One. Sure, the cars are souped-up and can hit speeds of over 200mph, but can they drive through mud? I thought not. Let's see how well Andretti and Gordon would do if they had to drive over rock and dirt for 24 hours.

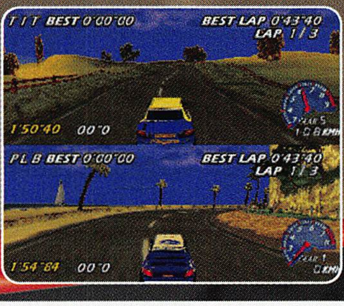
V-Rally '99 lets you join in on the off-road action, racing on 50 tracks that can be found all over the world (sorry, no Antarctica track). Races take place in such locations as Indonesia (I wonder if you will be able to drive through a riot in Jakarta?), Sweden (bork, bork, bork) and England (trade you a pint for a teeth cleaning).

Available for driving are 11 official World Rally Championship cars. Each car can be customized to better suit the road, the weather conditions and your driving style. Those of you that have the proper skills will be able to unlock the four special cars that are hidden throughout the game. No word as to whether or not one of those cars is the General Lee or the *A-Team* van.

Like all racing games, *V-Rally '99* will include the standard racing modes of Training, Arcade and Championship. An instant replay feature is implemented as well as three levels of difficulty. Last year's PlayStation version had impressive graphics and car physics, so hopefully this final version will be, at the very least, just as solid. All the tracks and features in the world won't help if the car physics suck. **EN**

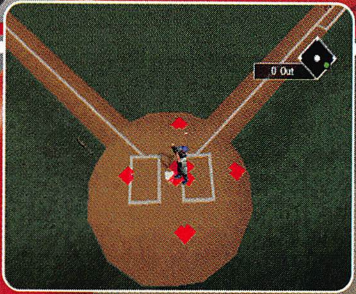


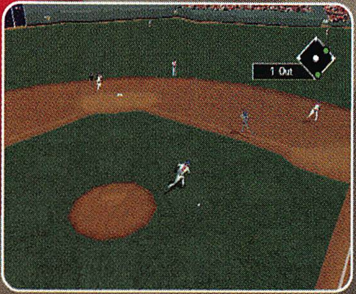


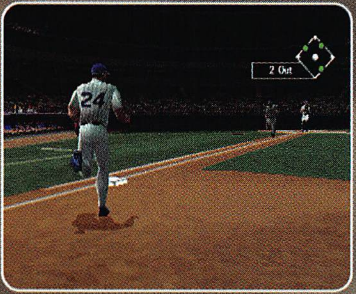


Triple Play 2000

*"...the **best baseball sim** on the PlayStation to date..."*











PlayStation

Developer: EA **Available: Opening Day**
Publisher: EA Sports **# of Players: 1-2**

R Review

Now I'm happy. The past couple of years have been back-to-back disappointments for this series. Promising previews would give way to final products that never fully realized their potential. *Triple Play 2000* has broken the string and delivers what is the best baseball sim on the PlayStation to date.

The biggest improvement is the graphics. No longer will you have to deal with choppy scrolling and low frame-rates. *TP2000* is finally where it should be, with fast gameplay, a beefy frame-rate and scrolling that is, to the eyes, what fine satin is to the skin. The addition of facial expressions helps telegraph the feelings of the moment, whether it is the disgust of a strike-out or the joy of a homer.

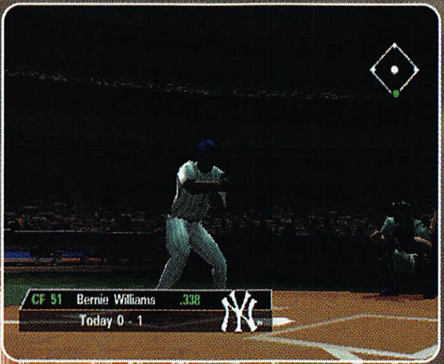
The number of in-game stats and functions is extensive, catering to all gamers with a thirst for information and a desire to manage. What you won't see, that plays an even greater role in the game, are the 1300+ individual statistics, which make each player who he is. They're all supplied by STATS Inc., the leader in such trivialities, so expect these ratings to be in-depth and accurate.

Triple Play's features have always been plentiful, but the addition of the Career Mode may be the most significant yet. Now, like in other EA titles, you can guide your ballclub through multiple seasons, watching them rise through the ranks to become the next great franchise.

One area that always left me listless was the homerun ball. Where was the fanfare... the exhilaration? Now homers are supercharged, adding a dynamic camera, some sound effects and some cool mo-cap to make the shot as exciting to you as it would be to any person in the crowd.

Two things you can always count on are excellent commentary and brilliant AI. *Triple Play* stands tall as one of the most "intelligent" baseball sims, offering ultra-realistic simulation and the kind of two-man booth that the competition can only dream of. These two facets combined with enhanced graphics, and what you have is the most immersive baseball experience that can be found on the PlayStation. **EN**



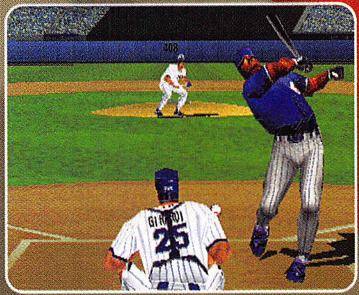


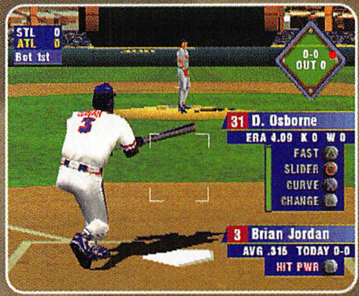


MLB 2000

"...the simple batting and pitching mechanics make **MLB 2000** just as easy to enjoy if you're a veteran player or first-time gamer..."











PlayStation

Developer: Konami
Publisher: Konami

Available: March
of Players: 1-2

R Review

989 Studios' *MLB* will always remain one of the most anticipated baseball titles despite its inability to get the whole package right. Once again, *MLB* comes close to where it needs to be, but hamstrings itself with some sloppy mistakes, relegating it to 'next-best-thing' status.

Before we discuss what's wrong with *MLB 2000*, let's talk about what's right. For starters, *MLB 2000* has some impressive graphics and smooth scrolling. The frame-rate is comparable to other titles on the market, even if the texture-mapping remains a bit behind. The gameplay speed is brisk, making for a speedy and exciting ballgame that will take you as little as 20 minutes to complete.

The laughable commentary that marred last year's version has been fixed. No longer does Vin Scully's familiar voice haunt your every inning; instead, it adds the necessary flavor to make the perfect auditory compliment to the gameplay. The addition of color commentary is a modest success too, making listening to the game more enjoyable... but still not at the level of *Triple Play*'s.

The interface is identical to *MLB '99*, and that's a good thing. The simple batting and pitching mechanics make *MLB 2000* just as easy to enjoy if you're a veteran player or first-time gamer. Shifting your defense, making line-up changes, and going to the bullpen remain fast and easy as well.

Now, let's talk about what's wrong. The biggest problem I have is with the AI. Consistently the weakest aspect of the *MLB* franchise, the AI still remains a bit sketchy. While the basics to fielding are strong, areas like base-running and base-covering are atrocious. Base-runners still (how many years am I going to have to write this in a *MLB* review?) charge to the next bag on pop-ups... even if they are in foul ground. This is such a fundamental area of AI that it dumbfounds me that it continues in a 4th generation title. This happened on Rookie Mode too, so the excuse that it is my job to control something so basic doesn't fly. Tsk, tsk.

Also a problem is collision-detection on some of the walls. Fly balls will seemingly disappear through walls instead of careen off of them. Get that ball halfway up the Green Monster and you're golden... instant homerun. Also, there is a problem with the game balance where it concerns base-running. You can be thrown out at first on a ball hit to the outfield, and yet someone like Daryl Strawberry can get a stand-up triple from a standard gapper, in Yankee Stadium (in his dreams).

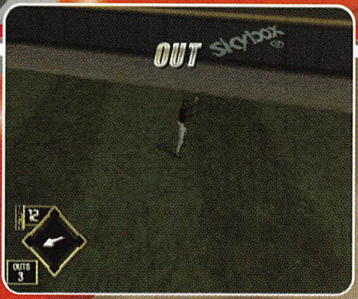
Many of you don't care about little things like that, so you should be very happy with *MLB 2000.* This is still a fun game that even entertains me, a hardcore sim fan. But, if you want to be able to play a headache-free, sim-heavy season, this is the last game you want to be playing. For those, *TP2000* and *Baseball 2000* are your bread and butter. **EN**

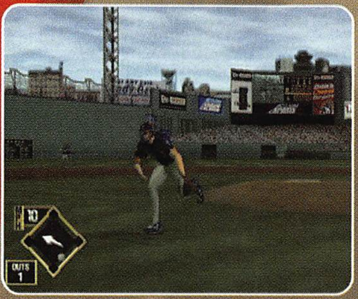


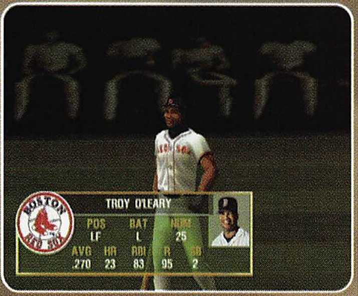


ASB 2000

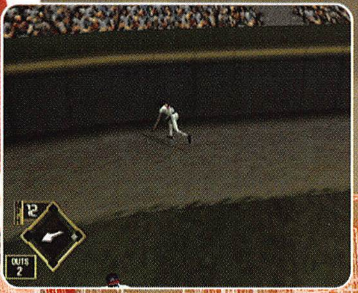
"...**ASB** 99 [had] **great** gameplay, **solid** AI, and the **best graphics** of any N64 title. How do you top that?"











Developer: Iguana
Publisher: Acclaim
Available: Now
of Players: 1-2
Review

In an office full of jaded gamers, most of whom have little interest in sports, for a baseball title to collectively stun an audience is quite a feat. But, surprisingly, that was exactly the case with last year's monumental opus from Acclaim. *All-Star Baseball '99* was a marvel, bringing together great gameplay, solid AI, and the best graphics of any N64 title. How do you top that?

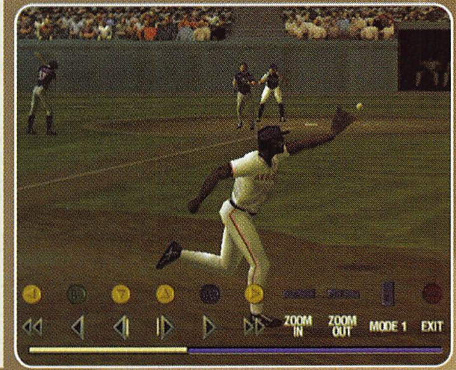
What about better AI, improved commentary, and more stats – all of which are present in *ASB 2000.* The graphics aren't much better, but let's face it, to top last year's look would have been next to impossible; it was already running at 60fps in hi-res. More motion capture has been added, but other than that, the game's still gorgeous.

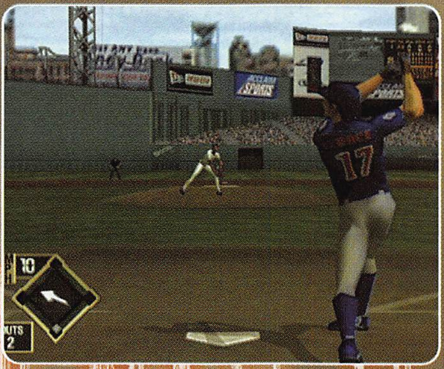
The commentary doesn't sound as tinny as last year's, and it avoids many of the pitfalls of inaccuracy that normally plague games with action-specific calls. The repetitive nature of the booth has been lessened (although not on the level of a game like *Triple Play*), which will be a relief to anyone attempting to play through a season.

One area that made me fall in love with *'99* was the ease of gameplay. More isn't always better, and the developers know this. *ASB 2000* uses a very simple interface, hearkening back to the days of three-button controllers and 16-bit machines. You don't need to utilize all of the different play features in order to enjoy, or even excel, at *ASB*. All you need to do is swing at the ball and aim your pitches... total bliss. The play screen is still a bit busy for my tastes, but the lush nature of the graphics make the clutter much easier to deal with.

The AI is as solid as any N64 gamer could want. I wouldn't put it on the same level as some of its PlayStation brethren, but the fielders *do* execute the correct plays and you can move formations around to guard the lines and watch for the bunt. Statistically, *ASB* holds its own, not bogging users down with a flood of information, but making sure that those playing a season can keep track of their players. Hard-core sim-heads may grumble at this, but *ASB 2000* isn't for them; it's for everybody.

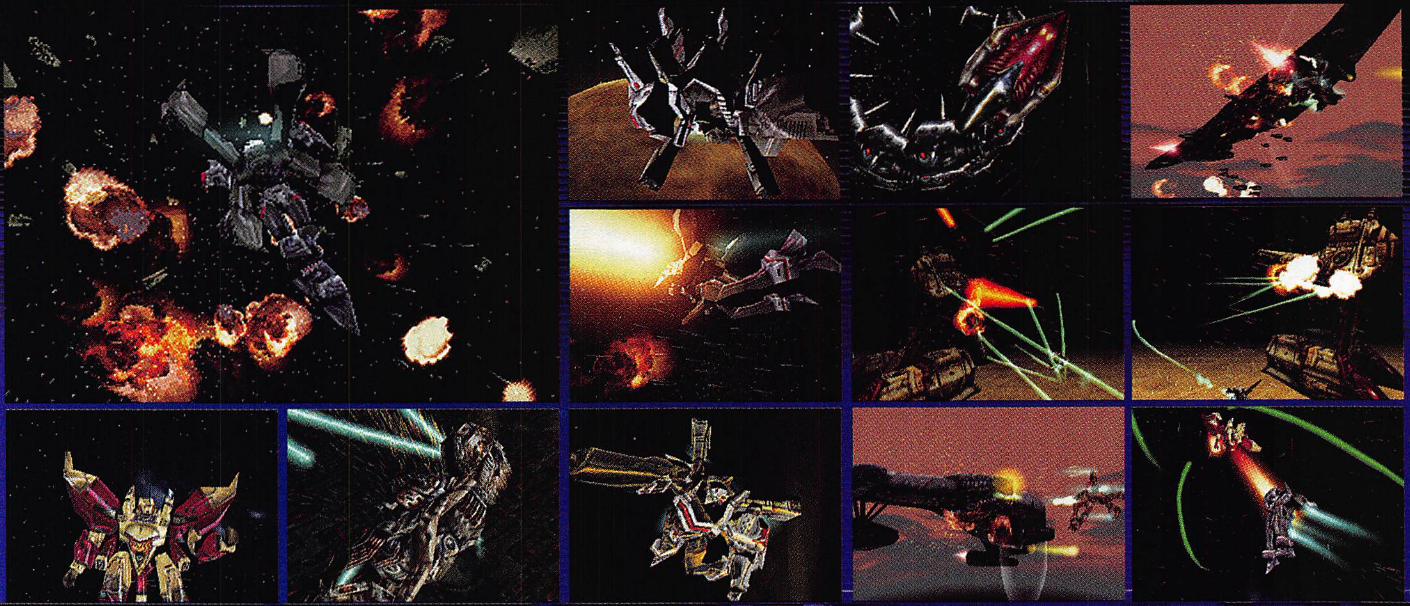
Acclaim has done the baseball world proud with *ASB 2000*. *Griffey* better have a major ace up its sleeve if it wants to compete with this. **EN**







Omega Boost



Japan

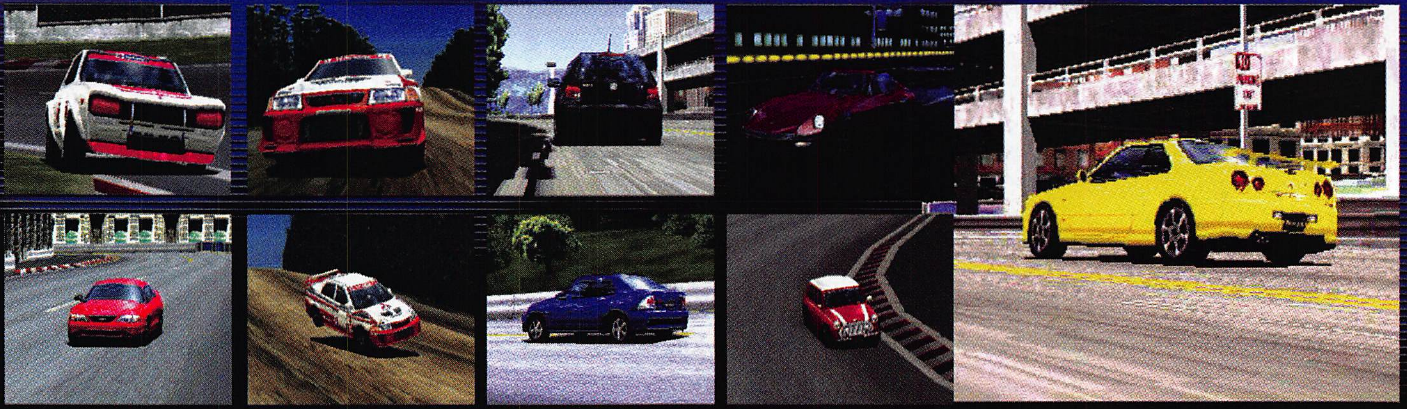
Polyphony Screen Shot Explosion!

Who would have ever thought that the developers behind *Motor Toon Grand Prix* would rule the world with *Gran Turismo*. With that triumph behind them they've seen fit to release a whole slew of screens on their next two titles: *Gran Turismo 2*, and their new shooter, *Omega Boost*. We'll have more info next month, including a hands-on look at *Omega Boost*. For now, feast your eyes on these shots and get ready for a shooter of *Radiant Silvergun* proportions!

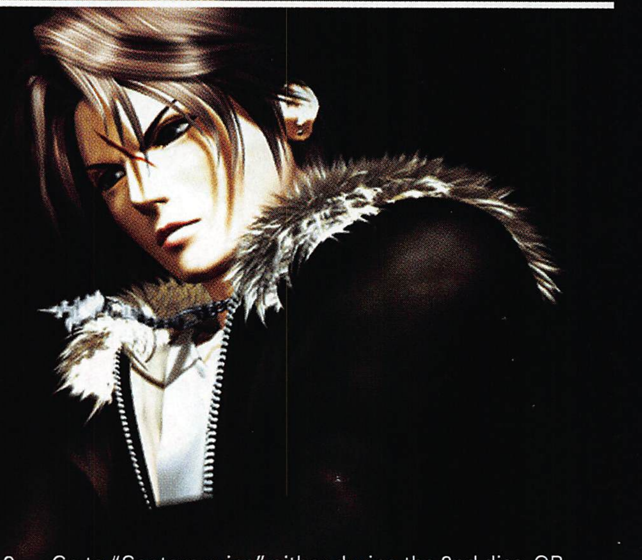


Gran Turismo 2





Final Fantasy VIII Update!



Final Fantasy VIII Bug Report

And you thought only PC games were buggy... Square officially released a statement concerning a bug in the 3rd CD-ROM disc of their popular RPG series *Final Fantasy VIII*. The game reportedly will freeze at a certain point during the gameplay and be unable to continue if a certain sequence of events is triggered. The following are considered spoilers, and only people who have bought the import and are on the 3rd disc should read it.

The problem seems to occur when these three events are done in succession:

1. On the 3rd disc, the player has cleared the "Trabia valley"
2. After that, the player challenges the time-limit event in "Sentora ruins"
3. In the "Sentora ruins," if the player went over the time limit during normal battle, and picked "Return to ruins entrance and retry"

But if the following events are done, there should be no problem:

1. If the player challenges the time-limit event in "Sentora ruins" before clearing "Trabia valley" or after visiting "Esta"
2. In the "Sentora ruins," if the player went over the time limit, NOT during normal battle (i.e. during walking around of the dungeon).
3. In the "Sentora ruins," if the player went over the time limit during the boss battle.

The following can avoid the bug problem:

1. In the "Sentora ruins," the player must clear the event without going over the time limit during normal battle.
2. If the player does go over the time limit during normal battle, the player MUST pick "Quit. Game over."
3. Go to "Sentora ruins" either during the 2nd disc, OR before clearing "Trabia valley" OR after visiting "Esta."

This bug appears in the Japanese version of *Final Fantasy VIII*. Future pressings of the Japanese version CD-ROM, and the international version should have it fixed hopefully. Square currently has a hotline number in Japan for anyone who has encountered the problem.

Now!

Video games come alive in upcoming anime



Video games come alive in upcoming anime

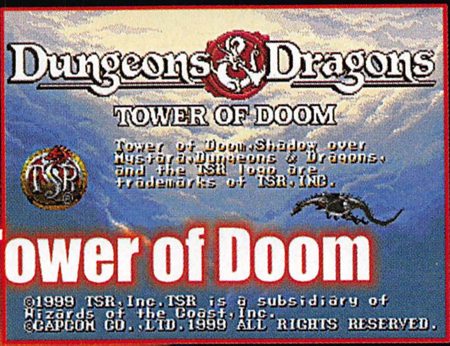
As both video games and anime gain in popularity, we're seeing the development of more anime based on hit video games. So put down your controllers and relax on that couch, as *GameFan* fills you in on three upcoming anime titles you won't want to miss:

Arc the Lad - Based on the popular PlayStation RPG, the show will air on the cable channel WOWOW in Japan starting April 5th. The director, Ichiro Kawasaki, previously worked on the *Popolocrois* anime. The series organizer and scenario writer is Akemi Mende, who fans will recognize as the script-writer in the popular *Gundam W* series.

Street Fighter Zero – After *Street Fighter The Movie* and *Street Fighter V*, it looks like a third anime series is currently under production. No details have been announced yet, but it is scheduled to be released as an OAV under the Selputa label. Shigeyasu Yamauchi, well-known for his work in the action-packed *Saint Seiya* and *Dragonball Z*, will be directing *Street Fighter Zero*. There's a lot of excitement building around this one already. Yoshihiko Umakoshi, of *Berserk* fame, will be doing the character design. How ironic, the perfect man for the job would have been Capcom's very own Aki Yasuda (a.k.a. AKIMAN) who was the original character designer of the game. But he is currently working on the anime production of *Turn-A Gundam*.

Samurai Spirits – Well, we've seen the anime *Fatal Fury* and *Art of Fighting* based on the popular SNK fighters. But finally, the day we've all been waiting for has arrived. *Samurai Spirits* is coming to an anime near you! The details are a bit sketchy right now, but we've been informed that Aoi Nanase is doing the character design. He's famous for his manga artwork in the Japanese magazine *Gamest*. The *Samurai Spirits* anime is scheduled to be released as an OAV.

Let's all pray that these anime see the light of day on U.S. shores... Considering the tremendous popularity of video games right now, I am sure they will.



Tower of Doom





If you were a Saturn fanatic like myself, then you've probably been awaiting the arrival of *D&D Collection* for quite some time (nearly two years in the making!). In fact, after *D&D* failed to meet its Fall '98 release, I pretty much figured the chances that it would ever see the light of day in Japan were slim to none. But, as miracles tend to occur from time to time in the gaming industry (anyone remember *Magic Knight Rayearth*... "It's alive, it's alive!"), *D&D Collection* managed, amidst all the speculation and doubt, to finally come out in Japan.

Fans of sprite-based games rejoice. Capcom loves you, they really do! When nearly every developer jumped ship as the ill-fated Saturn began its slow, painful descent into gaming limbo (quick, throw ECM a copy of *Radiant Silvergun*, he's having Saturn withdrawals again!), Capcom gave Saturn owners something to smile about with *D&D Collection* and the upcoming *Street Fighter Alpha 3*... It's all about going out in one big, sprite-based bang!!

D&D Collection is comprised of two classic arcade hits: *D&D Tower of Doom* and the sequel, *D&D Shadows Over Mystaria*. Both games appeared on Capcom's ever successful CPS2 board and were released in arcades back in '94 and '96. *D&D* squids <cough, cough ECM> and fans of Capcom beat-'em-ups such as *Final Fight* flocked to arcades during this pre-*Baldur's Gate* era in record numbers. Why it took so many years for this collection to eventually surface is a mystery to me, but beggars can't be choosers. I'm just happy to be playing!

The first game in the collection is *Tower of Doom*, a side-scrolling, medieval *Final Fight*-type game starring four unique TSR-style characters: a Fighter, Cleric, Dwarf, and Elf. Basically, up to two players at a time can battle their way through numerous stages littered with dozens of bad guys and a number of mid



Shadow Over Mystara



Dungeons & Dragons COLLECTION

Developer - Capcom | Publisher - Capcom | 1-2 Players | Available Now Japan | Viewpoint Score :89






bosses. Eventually, if you had enough quarters or skill (thank God I had plenty of lunch money!), you'd wind up going toe-to-toe with the big boss himself, who resembled the Grim Reaper. Along the way, players could pick up several useful items such as battle hammers, arrows, knives, oil, and of course, plenty of jewels and gold pieces. Also, after certain levels, players would enter a local shop where they could stock up on any of the aforementioned items.

The second disc (and my personal favorite) is *Shadows Over Mystara*, the sequel to *ToD.* Although visually similar to its predecessor, *SOM* incorporated much better animation and more levels of parallax in the backgrounds. Also, two new characters were available: a magic user and a thief. Like in *ToD*, players could choose various paths, and fortunately, this time around the *Shadows* cabinet sported four player simultaneous















action. It was really this multi-player aspect in *Shadows* that I enjoyed the most. The best plan was to have one friend select the magic user while the rest took either the fighter or dwarf. When the magic user would cast various spells to occupy the enemies, the rest of us grunts would attack in full force, blades a swingin'... What joyous memories indeed!

Although it's been many years since I played either *Tower of Doom* or *Shadows Over Mystara,* it appears that Capcom has flawlessly ported both arcade versions to the Saturn. OK, after seeing *Alpha 2* on the Saturn, I expected as much... But what of the loading time, you ask? Well, I initially expected *ToD*, which doesn't support the four meg RAM cart, to be the longer loading of the two... man, was I wrong! Compared to *SOM*, *ToD* might as well not load at all. In fact, if you're planning to play through *Shadows,* you'd best keep a book or a Gameboy close by, 'cause this game has as much loading as a NEO CD fighter... minus the cute, juggling monkey of course (ECM's Note: I seem to remember it as the sickening, juggling monkey...but that's just me). It seemed like every 30 seconds I was staring at the "NOW LOADING" screen which, in conjunction with a black background and a small pixelly fairy, was very exciting to stare at over and over...

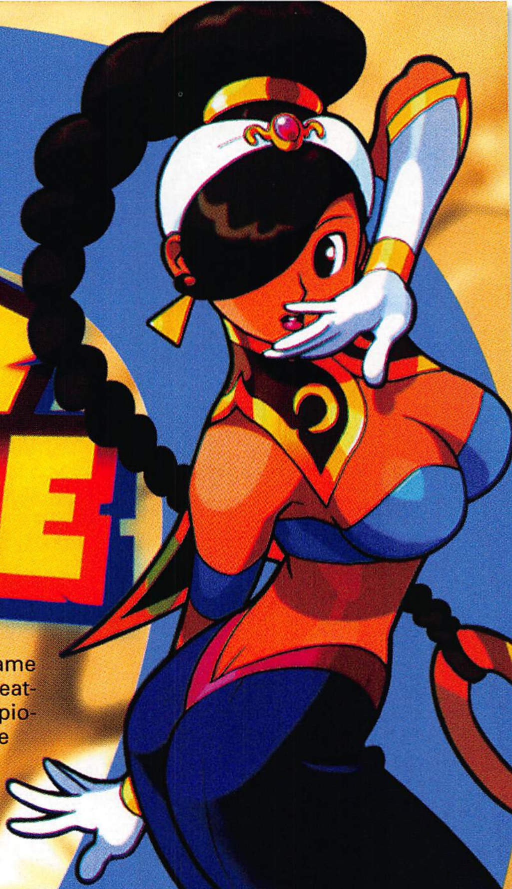
Minus the loading, Capcom has again delivered the home arcade experience in classic fashion. Both games are a blast to play through, especially when sprite-driven games are as common as a new issue of *GameFan.* How can you go wrong? Lastly, I'd like to thank Capcom for their continued support of the Saturn... it was a fun ride while it lasted! **F**





PowerStone





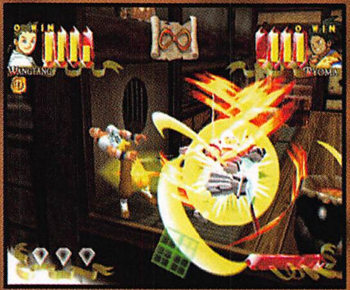
If you're a fighting game fanatic, then the name "Capcom" is revered and synonymous with greatness. With every fighting game released, they pioneered the very design of the genre, and I was there in the thick of it... shelling out quarter after quarter on their flavor of the month. So when the "Big C" decided to replicate that arcade magic at home, I knew that the years to come would feature fighters that would change the way I look at console games... and boy was I right!

Enter *Powerstone*... the first Naomi port for the Dreamcast and the game that will inevitably set the standard for arcade ports. Although the term "arcade perfect" has been used many times in the past to describe some of today's biggest fighters such as *Tekken 3*, *Bloady Roar 2*, and *SFA3* for the PS, none of these games can hold a candle to the perfection that is *PS* for the DC... port-wise. Because what *Powerstone* does, which other arcade ports have failed to do, is finally deliver the **full** arcade experience at home. It takes cutting-edge technology like the Dreamcast to bring you every poly, texture, and lighting effect with **nothing** missing... at home. In fact, the console version of this game was released **before** its arcade counterpart — how's that for timeliness?





Similar to *Ehrgeiz* on the PS, *PowerStone* is a true three-dimensional fighter set in the 19th century. Eight fighters have gathered to showcase their skills and obtain three colored gems known as PowerStones. Unlike *Ehrgeiz*, however, *PS* features much larger stages that fighters can interact with. Each of the 10 levels is littered with tons of items such as tables, chairs, benches, and support beams that players can either pick up and throw or kick at their opponents. Also, throughout the round, treasure chests will randomly appear, filled with a variety of selectable weapons including: flame-throwers, bombs, pistols, bazookas, broadswords, mallets and molotov cocktails. All characters can bounce off walls, spin around poles, and even swing from the top of the stage!



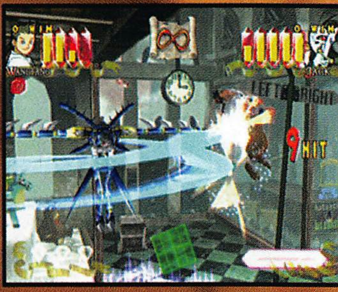


As with most Capcom fighters, character design is crucial for developing personality, and *Powerstone* is certainly no exception. Each of









FURY: More chaotic than Big Bubba's living room!	Developer - Capcom Publisher - Capcom	1-2 Players Available Now	Viewpoint Score :92





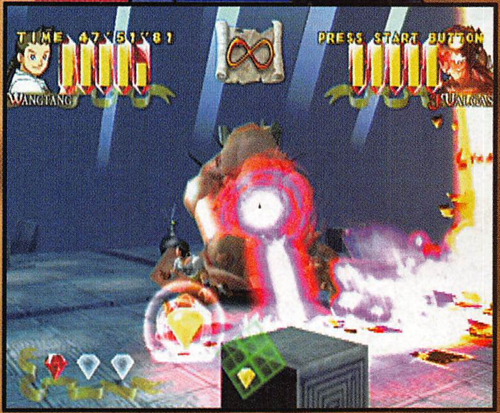








the eight fighters is rendered gorgeously and has been designed in a much more cartoonish fashion than the usual array of Capcom characters. The various fighters are: Galuda, a T-Hawk clone; Fokker, a British aristocrat; Rogue, an *Aladdin* refugee; Wang Tang, a martial arts student; Jack, a knife-wielding maniac; Gunrock, a notorious looter; Ryoma, a samurai warrior; and Ayome, a ninja princess. After collecting all three PowerStones, players transform, for a limited time, into a super-charged version of their fighter, complete with unique special attacks and two different supers. However, once you perform a super move, you immediately lose your powered-up status and must begin your search for the gems once again.





Unlike traditional fighters, *PS* is basically a punch and kick game, known to most fighting purists (Eggo included) as a mindless button-masher. If you're looking to pull off insane combos and classic *SF* moves, you'd best look elsewhere, 'cause *Powerstone* is far too chaotic to allow any semblance of balanced fighting or realistic attacks. Nope, everything in this game is intended as eye candy, so expect plenty of enormous explosions and some rather outrageous character animation in classic Warner Bros. fashion (e.g., getting flattened like a pancake!). *PS* also lacks a block button. Instead, players are expected to dodge attacks by frantically jumping and performing side steps. Unfortunately, many supers are nearly impossible to avoid and are far too damaging, so the game quickly turns into a mad dash for your life.





Although a great game, *PowerStone* is not without its share of flaws. For instance, when battling against the computer, you'll notice your opponent's uncanny ability to place themselves in the exact spot a stone is about to appear. Also, certain supers tend to create a bit of slowdown, but fortunately, the flow of the game is hardly ever disturbed... Definitely not bad for Capcom's first outing on Naomi hardware.

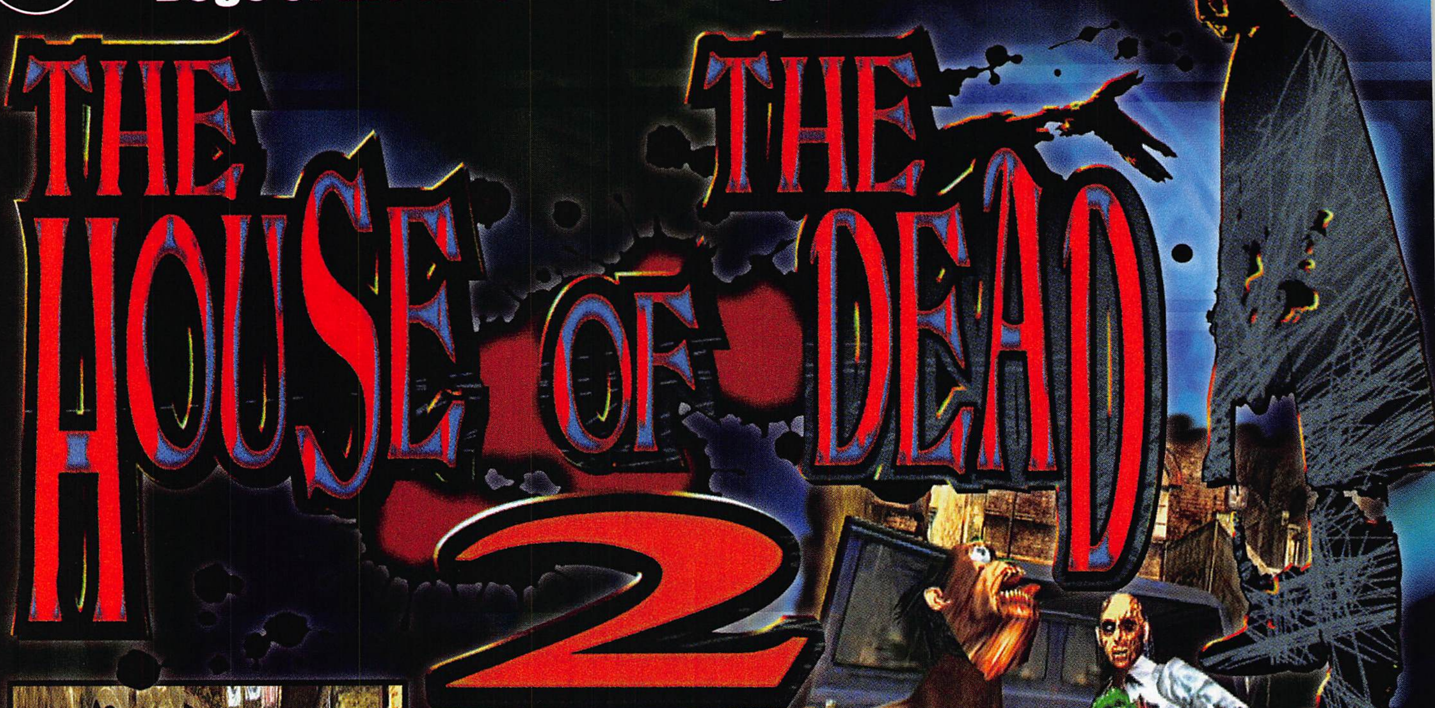
If *PowerStone* is an example of what's to come later this year (*Blue Stinger* anyone?), then all I can really add is that it's a damn fine time to be playing games. As ECM stated, "Games are finally back," and *PS* is only the beginning! ...Man, I hate giving that guy credit. **F**



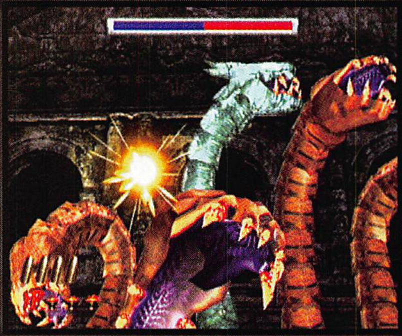




"Dogs of the AMS... Time they made a move!"









OK, so by now every gamer has formulated his/her own unique opinion of the Dreamcast. Now while I might not see eye to eye with the hordes of skeptics and naysayers, I will say this... *House of the Dead 2* on the DC is the greatest video game ever made! Relax, I was just attempting to throw in a bit of shock journalism to stir things up a tad... Ya gotta have fun, people!

While I still find a certain blue menace to hold top ranks on Sega's super console, I can easily say that *House of the Dead 2* is the next best Dreamcast game, hands down! In fact, this is just one of those games that simply needs to be seen to be believed. No screenshots or explanations can do justice to this amazing game! If Sega was looking for a title, other than *Sonic Adventure*, to showcase the raw power of the DC, then this is definitely the game... Break out the night-lights, and get ready to cry like a girl 'cause *HOTD2* is ready to terrorize living rooms for a change.

If you've played *HOTD2* in arcades then you're probably aware that this is another fine example of the beauty of the Naomi hardware. And, if you contributed heavily to the AM1 charity, like I did, then you're also aware that this is easily the hardest gun game ever conceived! Nearly two months ago, I got a chance to play *HOTD2* at a nearby arcade for a dollar a play... $25 later, the game was beaten and I was broke. Now, I realize that most gamers shy away from these 'money pits,' but never in my life have I ever felt so justified, for an otherwise ridiculous expenditure of funds... This game kicks ass!!

In the vein of *Resident Evil* and *Silent Hill*, *House of the Dead 2* redefines horror in such a gruesome manner that even George Romero would find himself checking beneath his bed a few extra times. There are so many things in this game that had me saying, "OK, that's just wrong!" that I just stopped counting. Aim for a







FURY: Harder than *Chakan*?! | Developer - Sega | Publisher - Sega | 1-2 Players | Available Now Japan | Viewpoint Score :98









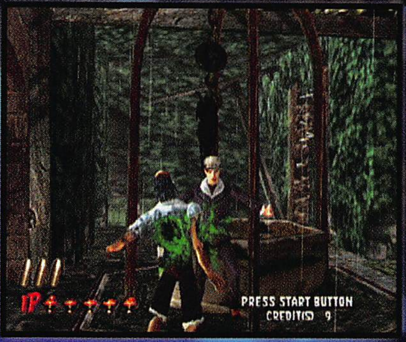
zombie's head, and you'll either blow it off or send it flying into the distance. The same applies to just about anything that gets into your line of fire, including hostages... "FURY, you just executed a 12-year-old girl!"... "No, I just freed her from her prison of flesh!"

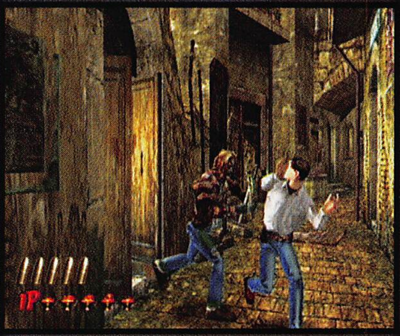
As expected, this game is arcade perfect. EVERYTHING (including the difficulty) is completely intact. And when seen on a Dreamcast VGA box (sooo glorious!), the game's graphics are a wonder to behold. Everything has such detail! The enemies, the cobblestone streets, even the smoke billowing from nearby smokestacks... truly amazing! But, do you really think that the powers that be over at Sega would be satisfied with just a perfect arcade port of *HOTD2*? Hell no, they've seen fit to include a boss mode (so you can hone your finger twitch of death), a training mode with 10 *Point Blank*-style mini games (such as "shoot the zombie off the windshield of that car"), and an original mode which is basically the same as the arcade with added options and extra weapons.

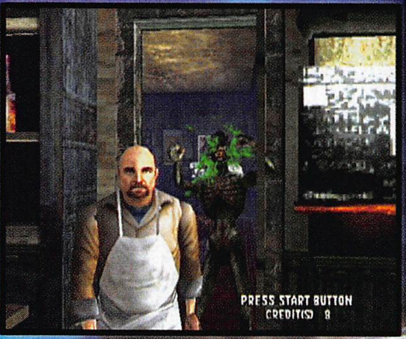
The only gripe I have with *HOTD2* is the game's sheer difficulty. As hard as the arcade version was to beat, at least you had unlimited continues ("unlimited" as long as you had deep pockets, that is!). This time around (at home), you're expected to cope with just nine measly continues... AGGHHH SOOO HARD!! But I guess this certainly makes up for the fact that *HOTD2* is really a short game. There are multiple paths you can access depending on your hostage saving skills; but, in all, the game has only six levels. Although each level is action-packed and hard enough to sustain replay value on its own, I still would have liked to see more stages included.

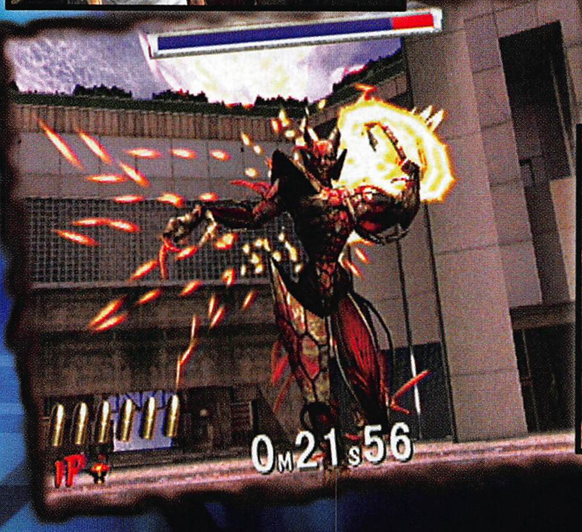
If you remember the joke that was the original *House of the Dead* on the Saturn (Oh no! Dango's fainted again!), then I guarantee you'll absolutely love what Sega has pulled off this time around. A few more titles of this caliber and Sega can silence all the critics. **F**

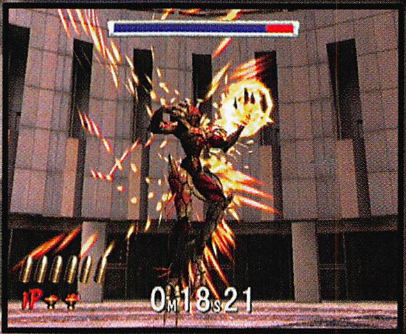






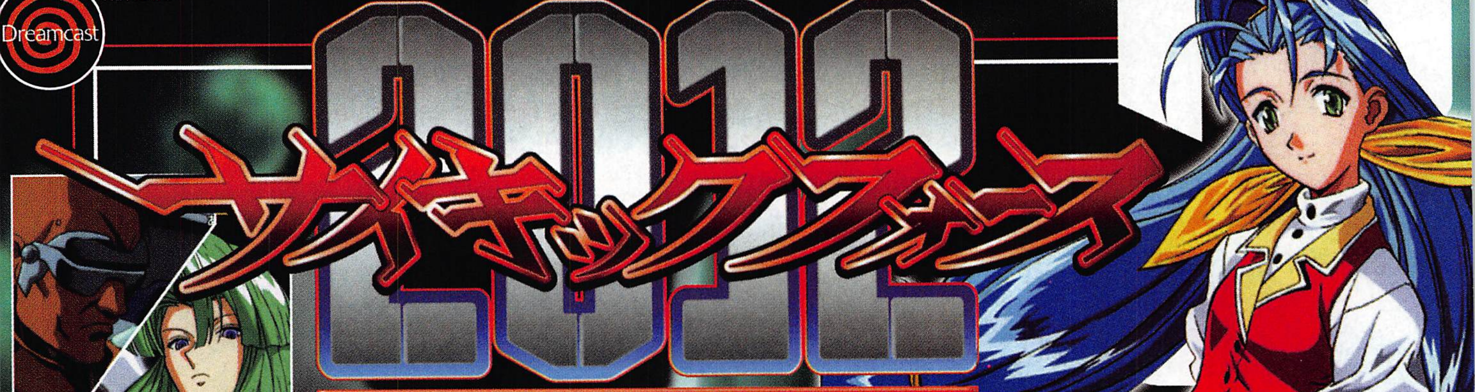








Well, the game's awesome... no big surprise. The big question for me always centered around the peculiar-looking gun Sega had in store for *HOTD2's* release. When I first saw it in a Japanese DC mag, I was definitely surprised by its extremely small design. After spending some rather intimate time with it in the dark [ed's note: Uh oh, Fury's been handling the little gun again, eh?], I can gladly say it does the game justice... Pinpoint accuracy and nice weight distribution make for a quality DC peripheral (unfortunately, I still can't shake the painful memories of the *Rally 2* wheel!).



PSYCHIC FORCE TWENTY-TWELVE







There's no mistaking it, gamers love their fighting games. If you're a hardware developer like Sega or Sony, you'd best make sure that your initial software line-up consists of at least a handful of quality fighters. And that's why you'll notice Sega's desire to ensure that the Dreamcast follows suit in just that manner, with the release of a number of big name brawlers such as *VF3TB*, *PowerStone*, *Marvel vs Capcom* and *Psychic Force 2012*. That's four big-name fighters, within less than four months of the DC's release... definitely one of Sega's smarter moves!

In Japan, the *Psychic Force* series has garnered a massive following over the years, and as overseas sales of both the PlayStation version and its arcade counterparts have proven, Japanese gamers are stricken with *Psychic Force* fever! In fact, the popular Japanese magazine *Gamest* reported that *PF 2012* was voted the #1 arcade game in Japan.

Porting *2012* to the DC was a no-brainer for Sega, who this time appears to be sticking strong to the belief that ports of popular arcade games can do a great deal to move DC units.

Now let's get this straight: *Psychic Force* is pretty unconventional for a fighting game, and in the U.S. it would only attract a small number of players... that is, if it ever sees a North American release at all. Generally, the idea behind the game is similar to most other fighters; abuse your opponent with a series of basic attacks (punches and kicks) and plenty of sparkling projectiles. The catch is that both players spend the entire round flying around in mid-air. This of course makes for a rather interesting learning curve for gamers used to conventional, ground-based fighting. As well, each arena is outlined with a colored square that players must battle within. Luckily, because of this "limited" playing field, the task of beating down the competition becomes far less ominous. After a bit of playing, aerial combat becomes almost second nature, and since the majority of attacks in the game involve fireball-type projectiles, the concept of high altitude arenas also becomes far more acceptable.

The stages and characters look like they're based on popular Japanese anime-style designs. Notice how incredible the fighters look in these screenshots... truly amazing! Although sporting spectacular visuals, *2012* is still a fighter only true *PF* fans can appreciate. If you've got an import DC and enjoyed the PS *Psychic Force,* or are just looking to experience **all** the joys of 128-bit games (*Seventh Cross* for example), then by all means, check out *2012*. As for me, I'm personally sticking to *Marvel vs Capcom*... acrophobia is my middle name! **F**



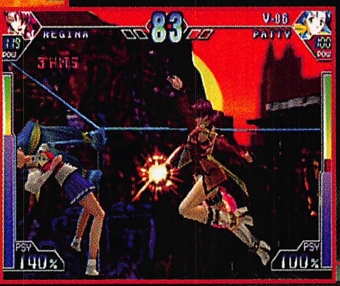








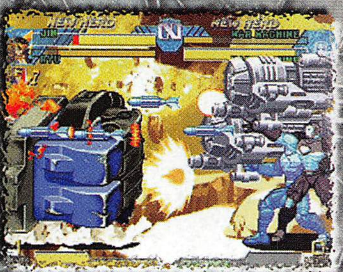




FURY: TRULY LIVING THE HIGH LIFE!	DEVELOPER - TAITO PUBLISHER - TAITO	1-2 PLAYERS AVAILABLE NOW (JAPAN)	VIEWPOINT SCORE :85

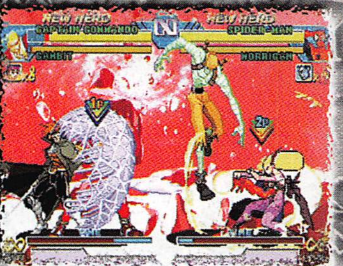
GameFan Up-To-The-Minute



It's Clobberin' Time!



Blowout Review Next Issue!

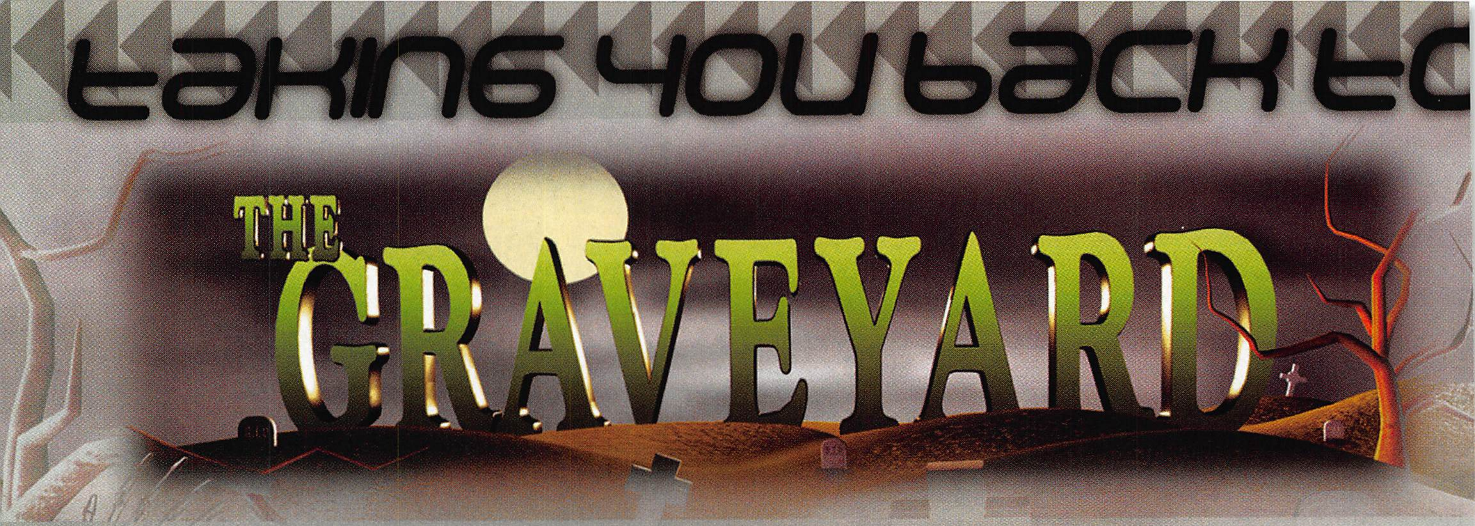






2D Capcom Perfection!!








"..WHO DIDN'T ENJOY GUNNING DOWN A FEW JAWAS NOW AND THEN.."








A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away... in a world not dominated by the polygon menace, when the word texture referred to painting, and bell-bottoms had not yet returned. A simpler world, a better world (especially that bell-bottom thing). It was the year 1991.

The SNES had just been released to the gaming public, and players were starved for games. *Super Mario World* was fine for some, but others still hungered for a fix that had not yet been fulfilled... action! The *original Super Star Wars* game for the Super Nintendo couldn't have come at a better time. While millions were flocking to the revived Genesis to give *Sonic* a spin, new system owners had a *Star Wars* game to brag about (at the same time, the start of a very profitable Nintendo/*Star Wars* alliance that continues to this day). And boy, could they brag.

The original SNES *Star Wars* game followed the movie to a tee, right down to having the 'dance' music while fighting in the Tatooine cantina. From Obi Wan's "Use the Force, Luke!" to Darth Vader's chilling breathing to the intro music... the soundtrack was pure power. Everything about *Super Star Wars* rocked. Eventually, those gifted with skill were rewarded with the amazing Death Star flying sequence. Oh sure, it might not look like much now, but back then... amazing! Who needed a CD attachment? And as sadistic as it may sound, who didn't enjoy gunning down a few Jawas now and then (screaming "Utinni!" as they flew off the screen) — priceless!

The second game in the trilogy, *Super Empire Strikes Back*, unfortunately, didn't quite live up to the quality of the amazing original. The control was waaaaaaaaay too floaty, and pretty unresponsive. In the platforming world, tight control is key. But, as the world turns, nobody really cared about how well the game itself played and proved once again the Gaming Golden Rule: slap the name *Star Wars* on a product and it will sell. It's a guaranteed thing; it always works. But to be fair, *SESB* had its moments. The whole idea of being able to ride a tauntaun was very cool; there was the whole



















"THE WHOLE IDEA OF BEING ABLE TO RIDE A TAUNTAUN WAS VERY COOL.."

lightsaber thing; and some of the bosses were especially brilliant... in a *Super Contra* sort of way. But when compared to the first, very disappointing.

And then came the finale, *Super Return of the Jedi*. This was the one I was waiting for, because *Jedi* was (and is) my personal favorite of the three. I couldn't wait to zip through the forests of Endor on my speeder-bike, blow up the Emperor, and hang with some Ewoks [ed's note: for the record, *GameFan* does not condone editors associating with small, furry bipeds]. But to be honest, after the debacle that was *Empire* (the game, NOT the movie... *Star Wars* fans, back off!) I was skeptical. Would the game turn out to be another mess, or would everything be right with the world and *Jedi* turn out to be fantastic? Well... sort of.

Thankfully, *Super Jedi* didn't have the horrendous control of *Empire*. As a matter of fact, it actually controlled BETTER than the original! The first time I set Chewie out to 'play' with a lightsaber, I couldn't believe how much better everything was than *Empire*. Indeed, out of the three, *Super Jedi* not only controlled better, but looked better as well (multiple layers 'o parallax... joy!)! The cinemas were amazing (well, amazing in the sense that they were pretty faithful to the movie), the sound was incredible (even MIDI-fied *Star Wars* tunes rock). Even the moves were better (Luke defends with his lightsaber... cool!) So just as I was ready to kick back and play the ultimate *SW* game, one thing became horribly clear... the game





was too hard! They may have fixed the control, they may have prettied up the graphics, but why, oh why, did they have to go and add those billions of enemies? Where's the joy? Where's the love?

By the time you anxious *GF* readers read this, the world should be fully enveloped by a new wave of *Star Wars* mania. *The Phantom Menace* should be painfully close to release, as theaters everywhere ready themselves (the smart ones, anyway) for the explosion. The original films weren't just movies for some, they represented a new age in storytelling, a fairy tale set to film and told in ways that weren't possible in a storybook. In short, they became a part of Americana... pieces of our, and I suppose the world's, culture. In the crazy event that the new film(s) fail to live up to the enormous expectations placed on them, we'll always have Episodes IV, V, and VI. And if the newer games that pop up (*Pod Racer*, for starters) fail to live up to their similar hype, we'll always have the *Super Trilogy*. Well, at least the original. Oh Yoda, Yoda! Anyone seen Yoda? **Super Teeter**

"I COULDN'T WAIT TO ZIP THROUGH THE FORESTS OF ENDOR ON MY SPEEDER-BIKE.."















One of the most talked about PC titles of the year has been *Giants*. Developed for Interplay by Planet Moon Studios (the boys from Shiny that did *MDK*), *Giants* looks to be a hybrid title, combining elements of the RTS and 1st person shooter in one thoroughly enjoyable adventure.

Taking place on a far-off world, nestled in some enormous nebula, *Giants* is a classic struggle for power and real estate. Two races have locked horns in an attempt to control the planet surface. The Sea Reapers, the planet's indigenous people, are battling the Meccaryns, a space-faring race who want the whole planet for themselves, just so they have enough elbow room to repair their felled space cruiser (can you say British Imperialism?). The Sea Reapers fight back by constructing a gargantuan monster, called the Kabuto. This colossus has his own plans though, and breaks free of Sea Reaper control in an attempt to dominate the world by himself. My God, what have they done...!

Each race has its own strengths and weaknesses which set it apart. Like any other game of this ilk, it is knowing how to play to your strengths and exploit your enemy's weakness that make the difference between domination and subservience. The Sea Reapers, for example, have control of the elements and maintain free reign over the water; the Meccaryns, with their knowledge of space travel, have the added bonus of technological superiority and aerial dominance; Kabuto is... well... really, really BIG. Being able to step on droves of people is an obvious one-up.

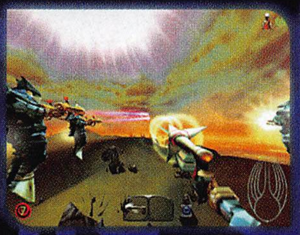
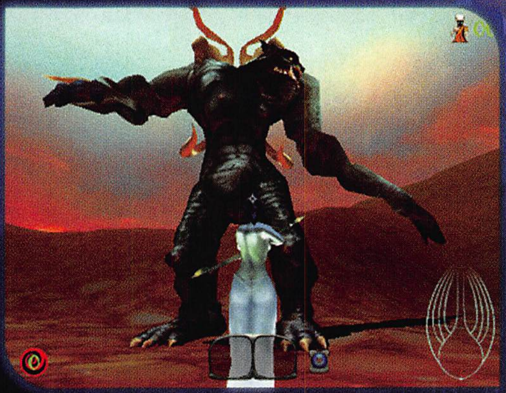
The most impressive aspect of *Giants* is its clever design. The 40 environments, that represent the backdrops to your skirmishes, are lush with detail and unique in visual flair. The three primary players are wonderfully designed and have a great deal of character, adding to the game's personality. Not that this should come as any surprise, given Planet Moon's pedigree (*MDK*).

While the game's sense of humor and quirky design make for a mirth-filled adventure, the strategic element of *Giants* keeps it firmly grounded in RTS. You are able to manipulate the local natives (the only other sentient group on the planet) to build items and vehicles for you as well as set traps. If you are Kabuto, treating yourself to a snack is also an option (I heard the natives taste just like chicken).

The hopes are to have an advanced AI sys tem that allows for much smarter enemie and comrades. Your computer-controlle teammates will react to changing battle con ditions, whether the situation calls for a hasty retreat, an ambush, or an all-ou assault. They will try to flank enemies and concentrate firepower on specific targets a they deem fit. This will enable you to worr less about what they are doing and more

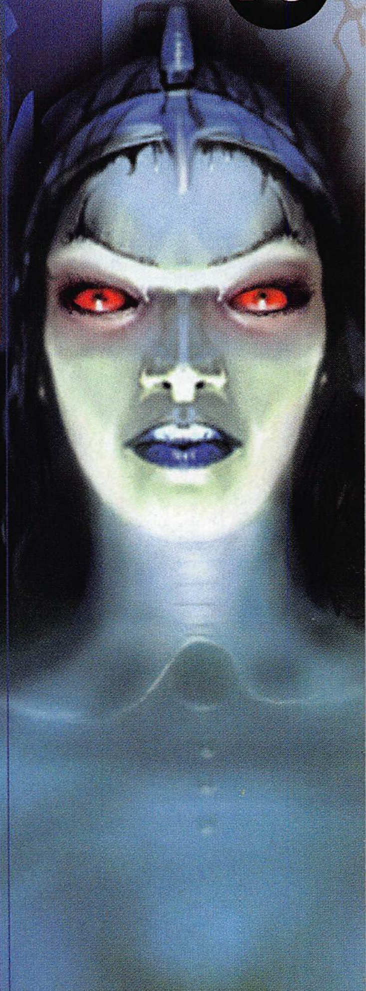




about, say, avoiding getting stepped on by Kabuto.

Giants, like *MDK*, is forging some interesting territory. Hopefully, the easy interface, comedic overtones, and stunning visuals will translate into the game the industry expects it to be... and then into some big sales. **EN**



5 Questions with Tim Williams, Art Director, Planet Moon

1. *Giants* is emerging as a possible genre buster. Is this what you envisioned from inception, or just the evolution of an ambitious opus?

Tim Williams: We knew that this type of game hadn't been attempted before, but we didn't set out to make something different for the sake of being different. At the core of this game is the question: What would be really fun to play? That's where we came up with the three completely diverse races and the specific gameplay inherent in each, the strange storyline, and the whole look of the game. We never limit ourselves. If it exists in our imagination we're going to do our utmost to make sure it exists on the screen when you're playing.

It seems so many games feed off each other too much for inspiration. I think we're often seen as being a bit different because we don't want our games to be in that category of, "hmm, looks and plays just like..."

2. Despite the originality and quality of *MDK*, it still performed below expectations. Did this affect the way you looked at *Giants*, from a design standpoint? Were there red-flag areas of *MDK* that you wanted to avoid repeating, conceptual or otherwise?

Tim Williams: I'd say *MDK* was about 80% of the game we wanted it to be. I think it was probably too short and could have done with a bit more tweaking. Of course, time constraints didn't allow us to do this. On *Giants* we want to take the player on much more of a journey. To accomplish this we've added more story than *MDK*, albeit just as wacky, and have created different characters which you can play and build up over time. This is a much more complex game than *MDK* so it's hard to compare them. Needless to say, this is the game *MDK* paved the way for. *MDK* was our first 3D game, so by the time we started on *Giants* our confidence was pretty high regarding what we thought we could achieve. Art-wise, we wanted to really open the doors to an unfettered creativity, and in doing so reveal a 3D world where the dark corridors and cliched graphics of so many other games have no place.

3. The buzz surrounding *Giants* has grown steadily since last year. Is there added pressure, knowing that you are working under heightened scrutiny?

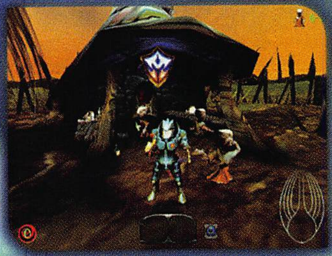
Tim Williams: No, the six of us have great confidence in what we're doing. In fact, we'd love for more people to know about the game, scrutiny or not. I think all you have to do is look at it and you'll know something different is going on here — the more people who see the game the better! We don't think about people's expectations or scrutiny. We're here to create a game to define what Planet Moon is all about, and so far it feels good!

4. Interplay isn't pressuring you with a concrete release date, allowing you to take the proper time to perfect your game. Is there anything you'd like to say to other publishers, out there, about the way they deal with their development teams?

Tim Williams: Well it depends on the team and the type of game they're doing. I've seen some development teams spend 4 or 5 years doing one game. Obviously this is a mistake. The technology changes so fast that these days it's hard to look that far ahead and plan for a cutting-edge game in three years. For us, we would never want to go longer than two years tops. *MDK* was done by six people in just over a year. Now, on *Giants*, we're still just six people doing a much more complex game, however, we're definitely bringing it out this year, under the two year mark.

5. If you had access to Don "The Dragon" Wilson, how would you best utilize his talents, in the game: motion capture or voice acting?

Tim Williams: Well, we could do with someone to get the rounds in at the pub.





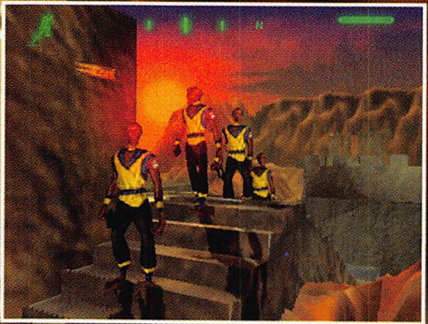
OUTCAST

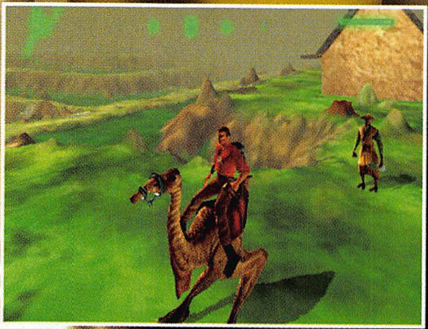


As I sit here, with press release in hand, I think how easy it would be for me to crank out a preview of spoon-fed PR drivel about the wonders of *Outcast* for the PC. It'd take no effort at all to ramble on and on about how innovative technology like "Paradise API" and "GAIA" are cutting edge and will 'revolutionize the gaming world as we know it!' While it's easy to do that, I won't... because I genuinely care about *Outcast*, and I think you should too.

Here's why: The production values for this game are incredible. It's been four years in development, and it's been time well spent because all aspects of the game are treated with the same masterful TLC. There's no skimping in any area: graphics, sound, gameplay... it's all there, and it's all top-notch.

Let's start with the graphics. As you scrutinize these screenshots and pore over every poly, think to yourself — this game is **not** 3D-accelerated. All those characters, environments, textures... they're all produced by software alone. So you don't have to own dual Voodoo 2's and 192 megs of RAM to get stunning visuals on your PC any more. In fact, minimum system specs are a Pentium 200 MMX with 32 megs of RAM (and no 3Dfx card, baby!).





Aurally, *Outcast* comes out all guns blazing. Lennie Moore (who has worked in television and movies) composed *Outcast's* 56 minutes of redbook music, which just sounds euphoric. The Moscow Symphony Orchestra and a 24 voice choir came together to deliver this symphony. Over 100 people working on the music alone? Talk about pullin' out all the stops... Yipe!

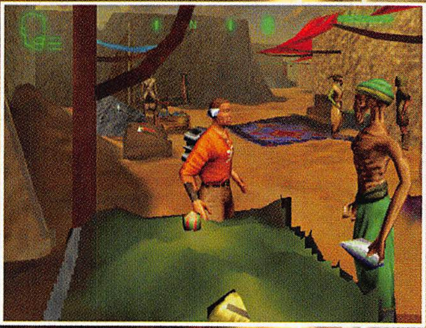
Then, there's gameplay — *Outcast* is an action/adventure which takes place in a **huge** 3D world with completely non-linear gameplay. When I say huge, I'm not kidding. It literally takes minutes to walk from one end of a town to another. Then there's six worlds to explore, 20 character types to interact with (featuring some of the best AI this side of *Half-Life*), six weapons to overuse, and 50+ hours of gameplay... how's that for bang for your buck?

The only problems with the game? *Outcast* currently suffers from a serious case of *Turok 2*-itis... in other words, a low frame-rate. But whereas *T2* was an action-intensive FPS, in dire need of a higher frame-rate, *Outcast* is an adventure game, which is not that dependent on it.

Lastly, I take issue with the game's star character — Cutter Slade, ex-Navy SEAL turned 'save the world' adventurer-type... There's nothing wrong with 'saving the world,' because that's what guys named Slade do. But **another** ex-Navy SEAL? Is there a beach somewhere I don't know about where all these retired SEALs are lounging about waiting for job offers? I bet there are more Navy SEALs in movies and games than there are in real-life. And Cutter Slade rolls off the tongue almost as easily as Casey Ryback does. Blecch! E



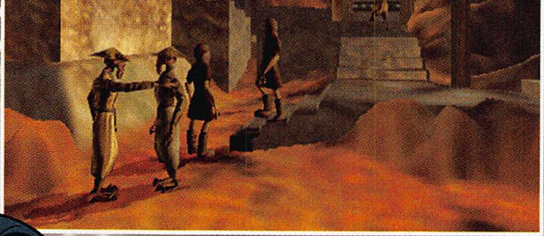






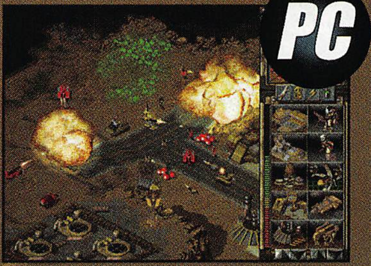






DEVELOPER - APPEAL
PUBLISHER - INFOGRAMES
1 PLAYER
AVAILABLE JUNE





Without a doubt, one of the most anticipated games of 1999 is *Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun*. There has been grumbling concerning its constant postponement, but these delays are for our benefit. Westwood Studios set out to develop a superior sequel with added features and a specific goal in mind — when the final product ships, it will be as good as it can possibly be.

NOD is back, much to the chagrin of GDI, and this time they have access to some pretty gnarly technology. It seems that alien forces are at work here, and NOD has somehow stolen some of their equipment. Even more alarming is the discovery that Tiberium is an alien substance sent to planets to "terra-form" them for alien habitation. There's a kind of *Day of the Triffid/Invasion of the Body Snatchers* thing going on here.

The most recent version we played was quite impressive. There were still some problems with AI and command functions, but the gameplay is classic *C&C*, and the graphics and features are some of the best of any RTS.

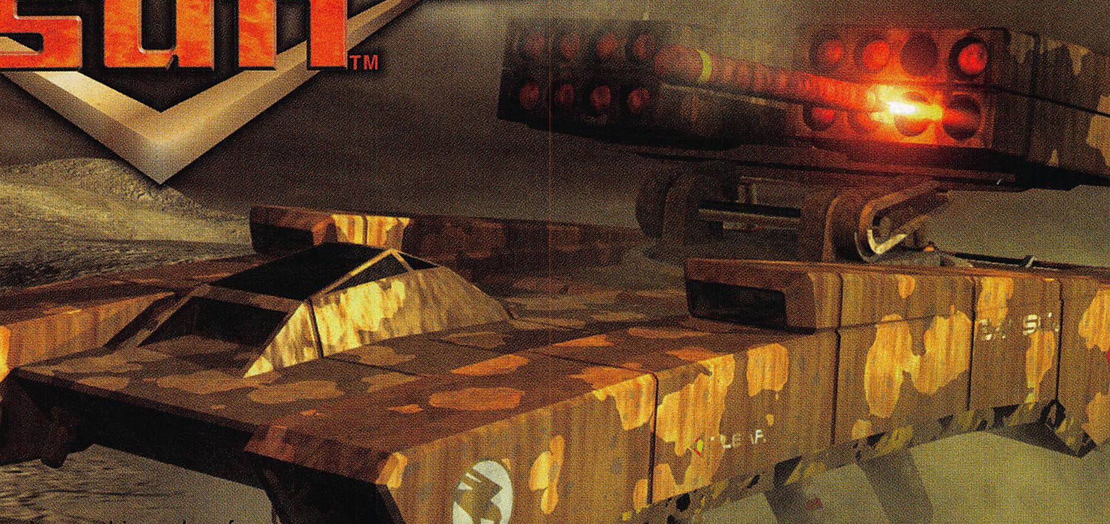
While many of the enhancements in the game are not surprising, following the normal evolutionary process indicative of RTS titles, some are in need of more attention. The interactive environment is the most prominent. The terrain is fully interactive, reacting to the effects of warfare. Landslides will result from artillery fire, ice will melt, and forests will burn when exposed to flame. Craters will even pock the landscape after a meteor shower. At first glance, this makes for some nice eye candy — nothing more — but in actuality, this interaction with the landscape is responsible for separating *Tiberian Sun* from the rest of the pack; this is an RTS with a major emphasis on strategy. Knowing how to utilize your terrain will become paramount. Booby trap frozen lakes to drown troops; start forest fires to flush enemy units out of the woods; blow up bridges to disrupt supply lines; cause landslides to breach enemy strongholds... This is what true warfare is made of.

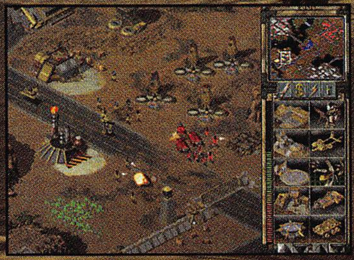




COMMAND & CONQUER® TIBERIAN SUN™













Also worth noting is the leveling up of your troops. Veteran soldiers will rise in rank, earning attack bonuses and better AI. No longer will you want to throw wave after wave of troops at the enemy, WWI-style. Now, an experienced trooper is a stronger trooper.

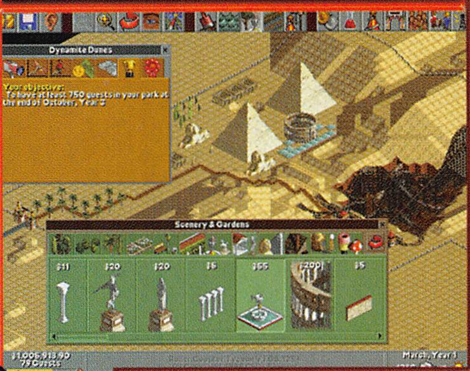
The list of advancements goes on and on. *Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun* will offer gamers some of the most strategy-intensive combat available. This game looks well worth the wait. **EN**

DEVELOPER - WESTWOOD STUDIOS
PUBLISHER - ELECTRONIC ARTS

1(1-8) PLAYER
AVAILABLE SUMMER

EL NIÑO: THIS'LL BE WELL WORTH THE WAIT.





RollerCoaster TYCOON



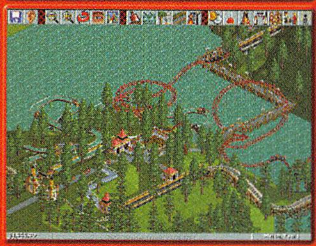
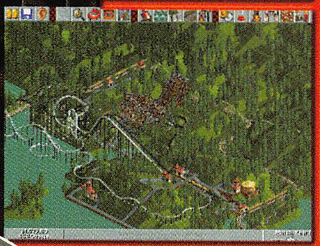



The game may be called *RollerCoaster Tycoon*, but it's more than that; it's a souped-up version of *Theme Park* that has you creating the ultimate amusement park. A few years back, Bullfrog developed one of my favorite games for the 3DO – *Theme Park.* It allowed me to build and micromanage my very own amusement park; doing everything from strategically placing ice cream vendors to customizing my own thrill rides, such as roller-coasters and flume rides. Like with all games, in time I tired of it and laid it to rest in a cardboard box in my closet. My theme park juices are churning again, and it is all thanks to Microprose's *RollerCoaster Tycoon.*

Some of you may be shocked to find a game like this nestled in *GameFan's* PC section alongside such action-oriented fare as *Phantom Menace* and *Giants*, but there is a good reason: *RollerCoaster Tycoon* is one of those rare titles that reminds you why you love video games so much. Hell, it is games like this that got me *playing* video games, in the first place.

RollerCoaster Tycoon has some of the best gameplay of any title I have ever seen. The interface is easy to use, the ability to customize is unparalleled, and the gameplay is so intuitive that a clever park designer will reap major rewards.

The number of rides, park amenities, and extras that can be acquired are staggering. There is themed décor (e.g., Roman or Egyptian), multiple roller-coaster styles, and every variety of tree, flower, lamp-post, and fountain you could ever want to dress a park with. Amazingly, none of this bogs down gameplay or develops into exercises in tedium. The *RT* map is your canvas and you will be engrossed as its painter, whether it is creating your dream go-kart track, or putting in beds of flowers for your patrons.


The graphics and sound are fantastic. Zoom in close and watch your guests move from ride to ride. When it rains, they'll pull out umbrellas (provided you have erected info kiosks, which sell them); when they buy cotton candy, you can see them carrying it; when they get scared on a coaster, you'll hear them scream. *RollerCoaster Tycoon* is as immersive in environment as it is in gameplay.

All fans of sims should put this Microprose gem at the top of their list of "must-haves." Even those of you who scoff at games lacking fancy explosions or Lara Croft's front porch will be sucked in. It took me only one day to get Eggo, Waka, Reubus, and Tao beggin' for their own copies of the game – and these guys are *Quake 2* nuts! **EN**

EL NINO: KEEP YOUR HANDS AND FEET INSIDE THE CAR AT ALL TIMES...

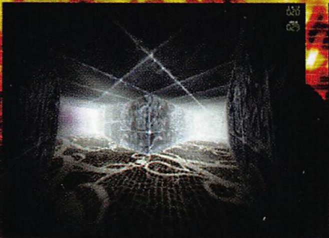
DEVELOPER - MICROPROSE
PUBLISHER - HASBRO

1 PLAYER
AVAILABLE NOW

VIEWPOINT SCORE :97

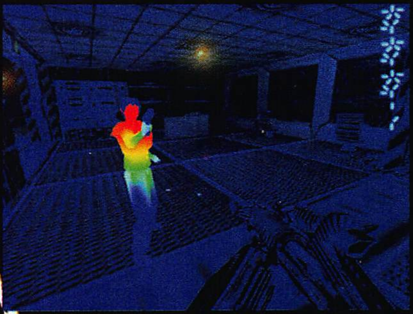
ALIENS VERSUS PREDATOR











If you're a first-person shooter trying to compete with the likes of *Quake 2* and *Half-Life*, then you need a gimmick. *Aliens vs. Predator* has that gimmick, combining two of the most popular movie creatures in celluloid history. *AvP* will allow you to answer the frequently queried, "Who would win in a fight: an Alien, or a Predator?" What may be a trivial question certainly makes for an interesting game concept.

You are given the option to play through three separate scenarios as one of the three primary races: Human, Predator, or Alien. Your objectives and motivations differ for each mission, as do your abilities, weapons, and battle tactics. As a Colonial marine, whose strength lies in the vast arsenal of weapons available to him, you participate in standard first-person fare, blasting Giger-beasties on LV-426 in an attempt to escape from the "shake and bake" colony which is overrun by the creatures.

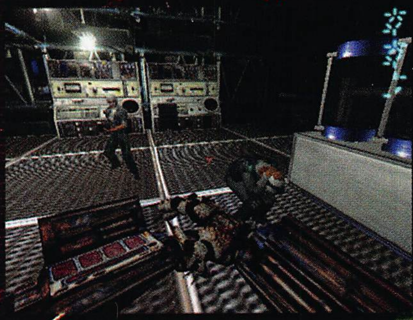
When playing the Predator, you find yourself deep in the jungles of South America, armed with the same weapons used to slash and gut all of Arnie's buddies. Blast marines apart with your shoulder cannon, or slice them in two with your spears or throwing discs; and if they



"I ain't got time to bleed!"

try to hide in the dark — no worries, 'cause you've got infrared.





The alien adventure is the most bizarre. You will creep and crawl through your temples in an attempt to expel the human scourge. While you have no weapons, you are not defenseless. Death to all those who are unfortunate enough to get within range of your acid spit or your tail's vicinity. Your lack of armament is made up for by your ability to scale any surface – excellent for surprise attacks and confusing enemies.

What would seem to be *AvP's* biggest strength turns out to be one of its greatest detractors. While it is totally cool to see both Aliens and Predator in the same game, the attempt to create separate scenarios for all three leaves you with shallow missions and some awkward gameplay. The marine missions are the highlight. Incredible atmosphere and some truly frightening encounters make for a devilish, alone-in-the-dark playing experience, reminiscent of *Alien Trilogy*. The Predator and Alien scenarios are lacking though, and will hold interest for only a short while. Putting you in their shoes makes for uncomfortable gameplay (especially the alien missions) and the storylines aren't as compelling.

In multi-player, the option to play these races is novel, but never reaches the kind of gameplay purity expected from a multi-player experience. The multi-player mode is supposed to support many more combatants, but the character balance just isn't there. It is clear that developers tried to do too much with *AvP*. If they had focused more on humans (or even just the Predator) versus the others, then it would have been infinitely more enjoyable. Hopefully there will be a sequel, because this franchise and engine are too slick to just stop at one. **EN**

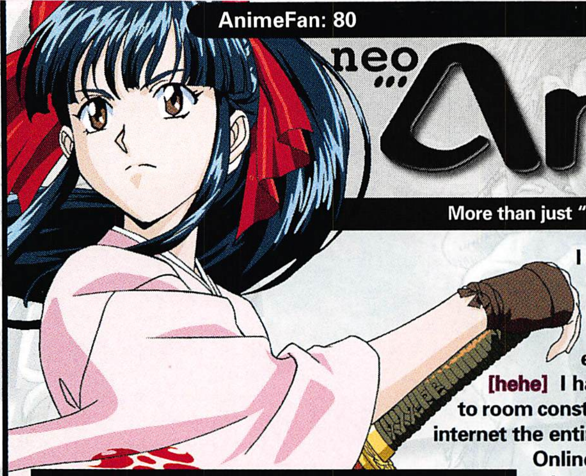
Viewpoint Score: 88 | Developer - Rebellion | Publisher - Fox Interactive | 1-16+ Players | Available Now

El Niño: I hate to rain on your parade, but we just got our asses kicked!

She's the Dangerous Type...

neo... AnimeFan

More than just "the anime section" - Anime, Manga, Asian Live-Action, J-pop, Culture, and all related products.



I originally hadn't planned on running the interview with Rachel Lillis this issue, but due to various reasons I am. Thus, please excuse the poor excuse for a layout for said interview. [hehe] I had to chop a small piece or two due to room constraints, but if you've got access to the internet the entire interview will be up on AnimeFan Online sometime soon. Beyond that, what interesting things do I have to say this issue? Uhm, I love my Dreamcast (wiz-bang PSX2 specs or not), ***Silent Hill*** is one of the coolest games I've EVER played (and that CG is amazing), and after seeing the second ***Star Wars*** trailer May 19th simply cannot come soon enough. Anyone who says this movie is over-hyped needs to be shot. I dare anyone, ANYONE to name me a movie in any recent years that was the true event that Episode 1 will be. - shidoshi

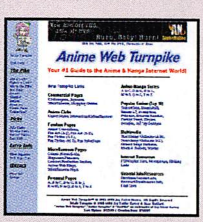
Websites



AnimeFan Online

www.gamefan.com/animefan

Hey, wow, would you look at that! Why, that's AnimeFan Online! Where did that come from? Er ... anyhow. Yup, the new version of AnimeFan Online is now up and running, it looks pretty spiffy, and it's got lots of nifty things on it that go beyond the print version into areas that I simply can't cover in here. If you're ever online, give it a look. - shidoshi



AniPike

www.anipike.com

Have you been to the Anime Web Turnpike? If not, you're missing out on one of the biggest and best resources for anime and manga on the internet. Think of it as the anime version of Yahoo!: If you're looking for a website, chances are that it's here - be it about anything from character guides to resource sites to image galleries. - shidoshi



Seiyuu Database

super.win.or.jp/~toshi/seiyuu/

Probably the best source for seiyuu (voice actor) information on the internet, the *Seiyuu Database* is the place you should go when looking for information on your favorite seiyuu, or to help familiarize yourself with them, so that you'll know who Iwata Mitsuo or Goddess Family Club is next time they come up in conversation. Sure, you know Inoue Kikuko is the voice of Belldandy, but did you also know she was Luna in *Lunar:SSS* or the voice of Kelly in the Japanese version of *Night Trap*? Now you will. - shidoshi

AF-Files: Rachel Lillis

Voice Work:	Fav Anime:	How to Contact:
Utena - *Utena*	Fire Tripper	Rachel Lillis
Goddess - *Gowcaizer*	Akira	c/o Central Park Media
Schoolgirl - *Takegami*	Ranma 1/2	250 West 57th Street
Incidentals - *Slayers*	Nausicaä	New York, NY
Misty, Jeffy - *Pokemon*	Tenchi Muyo, Laputa	10107

AnimeFan: How did you originally get into voice acting?

Rachel Lillis: I saw an ad in a trade magazine looking for voice actors for Japanese animation - I used to always enjoy the show *Star Blazers* back in the '70s. I thought the art was incredibly beautiful, and was really into a lot of the other American cartoons of the time. I knew that I always wanted to do voices, be a voice actor, but never knew that I'd do something when the two art forms met. When I was 13, I wanted to be a voice actor, and my parents were sort of like, "What's a voice actor?" It's a tough market to break into, and I have been into it for a little under two years, but it's very cool to be able to participate in it, and voice acting for Japanese anime is something I love doing. It's a fun process, we get in the studio, joke around, order lunch, get a little creative. We look at a line, and skew it a bit differently depending on how we've been going for the past few weeks. The words are there, but you have to take them in a direction that's real to you.

AF: How do you prepare to do the voice acting for an anime title?

RL: You just show up at the studio every day, do it for a couple of hours, and you make notes to remember where you are at. For preparation, you look at the character, the story, maybe get the script ahead of time - but I actually prefer the cold-read format. Sometimes it's better to not know the story ahead of time, so that you aren't trying for a specific idea. Sometimes the best read is the one that you haven't prepared for at all, but it doesn't hurt to have a bit of preparation. It's best to just experiment with things, get the person's age, who you think they are, a few other details, then figure out who they really are depending on what they say - like when you're reading a character in a novel.

AF: How were you brought into this project?

I auditioned for CPM; I've worked with them before. I had read for the smaller roles, and they kind of put them out of order, so that you don't know who's who. They don't really tell you anything, they just want to see if your voice matches the idea of the character. I was really thrilled, as this is the first time I've been involved in a long series from the very beginning. It's far different than when you have a small part in an anime title. When you're doing an incidental, you go in the studio and you have no idea what's going on - it's just kind of like "You're this evil sorceress, you're going to lob this fireball, just scream a lot and stuff."

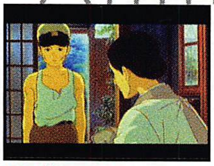
AF: How did you feel about being involved in Utena, seeing as how it looks to be such a big title for CPM?

At first, I was kind of intimidated by the title, because I don't know what's popular these days. I was intimidated because I didn't know the artists previous work, so it took me a few episodes to really the part.

AF: Who is your favorite character in Utena?

RL: Miki Kaoru, I think. He is one of the

Anime for the Entire Family



Grave of the Fireflies

A touching yet somewhat scary tale about the horrors of war. Parents may want to watch with their children and discuss afterward.



Night on the Galactic Railroad

Magical tale of a young boy who discovers the wonders of life that both young and old can watch and enjoy.



younger boys, he's in the student council, plays the piano, he's very advanced, the older girls like him because he's so adorable. He takes a shine to Anthy, and Utena encourages this, because she's kind of taken in upon herself to get Anthy's social life up. He's not really into what the student council is doing, he's pretty sympathetic to Utena and Anthy, he's generally a sweet guy.

AF: What kind of person is Utena?
RL: I think she's a tomboy, she's kind of naive, she cares a lot about the people close to her, so much so, and I can understand this totally because I'm like this with my friends and they are with me, if someone is bothering them, you protect them. She's really down to earth, and I think that's all she wants to be is a good person, and she really doesn't understand all the things around her on her campus, yet she's going along with it.

AF: Now let's turn it around. What about you? What kind of person is Rachel Lillis?
RL: I'm a pretty boring person! I like the behind-the-scenes stuff, putting together jingles, working on the voice acting stuff, seeing what all going into the production. I've been the person running out getting bagels and donuts for the staff. **[laugh]** When you're in front of the camera, you know what it's like on the other side, so you're much more into everything that's going on. I've done some nature narration for Tom Snyder Productions, stuff like CD-ROMs on how cotton grows, how cows are milked, underwater sea life, things like that. "This is scuba gear, if you look closely, you can see all of the gadgets and switches, blah blah..." **[laughs]** Narration is something different entirely, you get used to that kind of thing, counting the beats, you just keep going and learn the art of turning the page without making a sound. Then maybe you go into voice-over for a commercial, and most commercial reads are this big ball of energy which you have to dredge up, then you do maybe like five takes and it's over. You have to learn how to use your voice to sell something or tell a story without being boring. In *Utena*, you get to grunt, have a sword fight, put in subtle little things that really add the spice.

AF: What do you think of the increase of shoujo in the US?
RL: I think it's kind of disturbing... er, not the increase of shoujo in the US, but that a lot of the movies you see in theaters haven't really been targeting a young female audience. I read this article in the NY times that that's who we're targeting, the young boys, and the girls will follow. I don't know if the *Utena* audience will be all girls, but I do think it's a good thing, it's a void that certainly needs to be filled.

AF: Okay, so let me ask you the big question - what's your opinion on Sailor Moon?
RL: I've never seen it! **[laughs]** The guy who did *Utena* worked on *Sailor Moon*, and almost everybody who has talked about anime, fan or not, has seen it. I have NO clue what it's about, all I know is that a cat with a moon on it's head, and a girl with the wachamadealy - the girl with pigtails on her head. I know that because I went to the con and saw all of these guys dressed as Sailor Moon.

AF: What's your opinion on the Sub vs. Dub debate?
RL: As an anime fan, I wasn't really familiar with dubbed tapes, because subtitles was most of what was available. I lived in a small town, and there wasn't much around. There seems to be a strong anti-dubbed feeling among a lot of fans. But I've seen *Slayers*, thought that they did a fantastic job, and I've seen a lot of other things that they've released. It's not just a case of them putting the stuff out, they want to get voice actors who really fit the characters, work well on the timing, and try to bring some of the humor over from the original Japanese to English (since some jokes don't translate well). Most of the time it's fine, but there are some points that you really have to change things around. I know with *Utena* they wanted to keep the Japanese names, but in *Pokemon* they changed them all around. If they keep the Japanese names, you really have to get the names down and know how to say them correctly.

AF: Do you ever feel weird when you tell people what you do for a living?
RL: Well, my parents are like that, they're like, "Okay, right, when are you going to medical school?" But the people I work with are mostly actors, so they understand. I haven't told a lot of people, but those I did tell thought it was really cool, even if they didn't know what anime is. We don't talk a lot about what we do for work, but yet they want to know what parts I've done, what the anime titles I work for are about.

AF: If you could be the voice actress for any character or in any series, what would you want to do most?
RL: I've always liked Akane from *Ranma 1/2*. Or *Nausicaä* - when I first saw her, I thought that that would be very cool.

AF: What kind of anime do you like?
RL: Miyazaki is probably my favorite. The first anime I ever saw was Warriors of the Wind. I saw the English version after the US, a friend send my *Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind* with a typed out plot, she said that I was going to need it. I thought she was going to send me the English version, but she was like, "No no no!" I really didn't need the English version, the Japanese was so well done. She sent me Laputa, and the whole first season of Ranma, including Japanese commercials. I got more into it, then kinda really watched all of the Miyazaki that I could, the *Macross* movies, those were really good. I even have a *Nausicaä* poster at home.

Nausicaä came with so many interesting ideas. Miyazaki always throws in a zillion time periods in his movies, like *Kiki's Delivery Service*, with it's wood burning stoves, yet it also has automobiles and flying machines. He's always straddling the past and the future, yet you never know what time period you are in. That's true in *Nausicaä* as well. Nausicaä herself is a very inspiring character, she doesn't know much beyond the sheltered life that she's lived, but her spirit is strong, and everyone who comes into her life is influenced by her. *Nausicaä* really did have an effect on me.

AF: How can fans contact you?
RL: Through Central Park Media - send anything you would like their way, and they'll get it to me.

AF: Anything you would like to say to our readers?
RL: I don't know! **[laughs]** I'm really psyched about the fact that anime seems to be coming along in the US, and I hope that more incredible titles will be coming out, because the more dubbed titles that get released, the more people will be exposed to it, since I've heard that dubbed titles are usually what people are first introduced to. I hope everyone likes *Utena*, we worked really hard on it! I think it's amazing that people are pulling for anime, and I hope that it continues to grow.

Thanks to Rachel and CPM for this interview. - shidoshi

AnimeFan rates each title reviews on a scale of A (excellent), B (good), C (average), D (poor), and F (horrible). Remember, a grade of C isn't bad, and only when a title starts getting into the D range should you start to consider avoiding it at all costs. For DVD titles, two scores are present, one for the anime itself, and the other for it's DVD presentation. The DVD grade covers everything from image quality to package to extras, so while a DVD may look beautiful, it could loose points for having no extras or other such issues.

Guide to Ratings Codes

We'll use this example:

Sub | Dub
VHS | LD | DVD

Black: The title is available in that format / language. So, for our example, the title is out in both Sub and Dub on VHS.

Underlined: The version being reviewed. So, we're reviewing the VHS Sub version.

Greyed: Not available. So, our title isn't out on LD.

Red: Coming soon / planned. Our example title is planned for release on DVD.

Send comments, letters, artwork to:

AnimeFan
6301 DeSoto Avenue
Unit #E
Woodland Hills, CA 91367

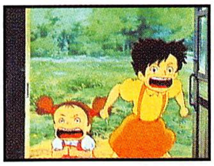
Or :
shidoshi@gamefan.com

SOME OTHER IDEAS FOR ANIME THAT ALL MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY CAN ENJOY

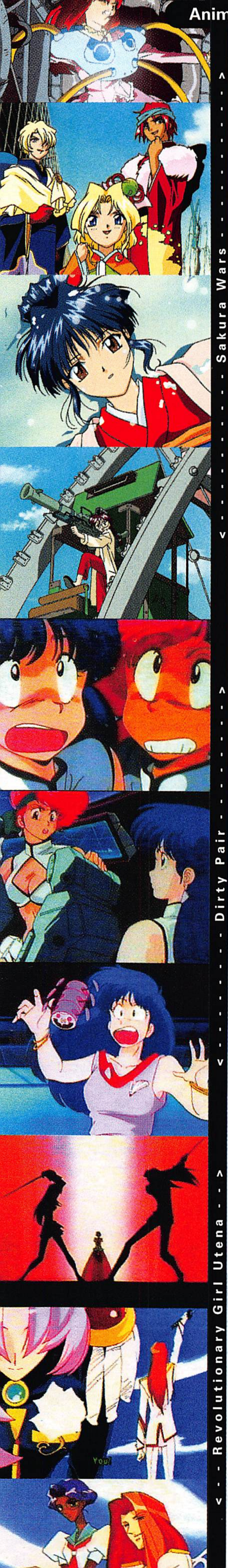
Pokemon
The kids seem to go nuts for this one. Others will either have fun with it or try not to gag while watching.



Kiki's Delivery Service
Anime at it's finest from Miyazaki that trumps anything coming from Disney at any recent point in time.



My Neighbor Totoro
Another wonderful tale from Miyazaki that's perfect for any age of fan and is a rather good dub to boot.



AF Reviews

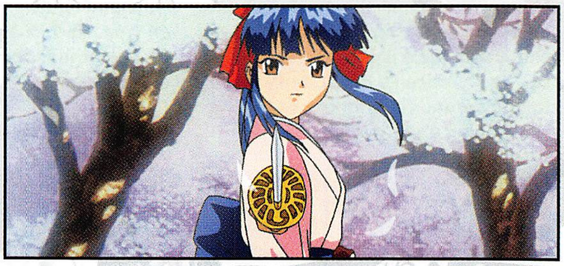
What's playing in anime this month

Sakura Wars

Adventure • OAV • ADV Films • 11+
60 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

A-

Sometimes people love something without knowing much about it - thus was the case with me and ***Sakura Wars***. Even though I've never played either of the Saturn titles, I've always thought the cast looked cool, the character designs were lovely (hey, my idol Kousuke Fujishima was responsible for them, so how could they NOT be), and it's got one of my absolute favorite theme songs. Thus, it's no surprise that I was eager to finally get a chance to experience the adventures of Sakura and her teammates. It seems like the more you like something, the worse the little "problems" with it are. First and foremost, and I know you're getting sick of hearing me say this, but this OAV series is just too damned short. Quite a bit of running time was spent with character development, which is a positive thing, but the team isn't fully formed until the end of the second episode. As there are only two more episodes, it ends up being: build the story up, get us to start to really fall for the characters, then WHAM, just end it... what a tease! [sigh] My other big letdown was the animation quality. Now, it's not bad, and it's only questionable in a few instances, but to me it doesn't do the title justice. A good comparison would be to ***Oh My Goddess!***, which has the same "high artistic style" that I feel ***SW*** has. The ***OMG!*** anime was beautiful and captured the artistic essence of the title, and had Sega pumped a few more yen into the production budget of ***SW***, this one could have been the same. But, enough of that, because the strong points of this one outweigh the scant few negatives. Great character designs, rich cast personalities, enriching music, and a dub that I had little to disagree with - though, with the strong Japanese voice cast that ***SW*** had, I've got to give my recommendation to the sub version. I know I have a tendency to do these "rant" reviews on titles that I like, but that's because when the title is so good, the little things just get under my skin. If you like ***Sakura Wars***, definitely check out the anime, and if you know nothing of it, just get it and be surprised. How's that? **- shidoshi**



Dirty Pair

Live Action • Movie • ADV Films • 13+
90 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

B+

Kei and Yuri are two of the top Trouble Consultants for the 3WA, the space organization that goes out to solve problems that may arise. While their official nickname is "the Lovely Angels," most know them by a name that they loath - the "Dirty Pair." Why that nickname, you ask? Well, Kei and Yuri tend to solve problems by any means necessary, even if it means blowing up an entire space colony or racking up a high body count. Because of their reputation, not only do their enemies fear them, but their friends as well!

Geez... does this one bring back some memories. I first saw the "original" ***Dirty Pair*** series some eleven years or so ago, and credit them for really getting me interested in anime in the first place (before that, I only knew of the few manga titles that were brought over to the US). Now here I am, years and years later, getting to see the TV adventures of Kei and Yuri officially released in English - something I NEVER thought I would see (especially after all this time). Sure, having ***DP Flash*** come out was sort of cool, but that series couldn't hold a candle to the original. Kei and Yuri, in my eyes, weren't meant to be turned into the flighty, slacker teens that they were in ***Flash*** - they were always two skilled special agents who just had a problem respecting the price of all of the destruction and havoc that they caused. ADV is releasing ten episodes over five volumes, and while I've heard nothing about them releasing other episodes, I'll take all that they are willing to give. Fans who are still relatively new to the anime world might watch ***Dirty Pair*** and not understand what the big deal is. But for people like me, who used to watch blurry, fuzzy, untranslated copies of these episodes, this is a classic getting the shot in the US that it really deserves. Time hasn't been totally good to the series - the art and animation look rather old and crude by today's standards - but if you put that aside (which you should), or can appreciate older-looking anime, this is still a greatly enjoyable show. Maybe part of my love for it is nostalgia, but as far as I'm concerned, I'm finally getting quality copies of an anime series that I've loved for most of my otaku life, and because of that, life is just a little bit better. **- shidoshi**

RG Utena: The Power of Dios

Shoujo • TV (3 eps) • Soft Sculpt • 11+
75 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

A

So, here we are ... the final (at least, possibly for now) volume of ***Revolutionary Girl Utena***. The last time an anime title has caught my attention and drawn me in as ***Utena*** has done I cannot even recall. Just when you think you're seeing the same old things, the same characters and storylines and sense of boredom that plagues anime from time to time, something like ***Utena*** rides in on a white horse to save your faith in the industry.

Bit by bit, piece of Utena's past are starting to unravel ... her parent's death, her brush with a prince, the reason she is exactly the girl she is today. Is she still desperately waiting for her prince to arrive, or is he far closer than she could even expect? In the midst of all of her questions, she is called once again to the duel, this time by the warm and handsome Touga. But a deeper demon resides inside him, and he doesn't intend to loose. Before she knows it, Utena has lost the duel, lost Anthy's friendship, and lost all of her will to go on. Her life begins to unravel around her, hope and strength replaced by despair and fear, and Utena's fiery spirit seems ready to burn out. But after fighting so hard and long, can she simply just sit back and watch all she's worked for slip away, or can she pull herself together enough to try and re-take her life?

Utena has so much style and elegance to it that other anime titles can do nothing but look on in jealousy. It's art and animation style, strong story writing and direction, atmospheric music, all that are both beautiful and bizarre both at once creating a style that's very unique. Supporting these elements are the cast, which often rise beyond your usual mixture of boring and two-dimensional characters. The bad guys here's aren't simply "bad," they are simply humans that walk a fine line between sympathetic and loathsome. Since the final episode on volume 4 is the wrap-up for the Student Council storyline, it acts as an acceptable ending for the US release. However, since there are 26 more episodes, a lot of questions remain unanswered. Software Sculptors has the rights to the entire TV series, and it's possible that the rest will come out over here, but for now, nothing is certain. If there is justice in the world, however, we'll get the rest, because this series is simply too good to not be fully released in English. **- shidoshi**

"I was not elected to watch my people suffer and die while you discuss this invasion in a committee!"

Fushigi Yûgi: Separation

Shoujo • TV (3 eps) • Pioneer • 13+
75 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

B+

Could this be it? Could Miaka really be going home? The group has made it to the legendary mountain, and the ritual to send Miaka back to her time and place begins. The attempt is a success, and Miaka arrived back in the reference room in the library where her adventures begin. However, Miaka notices that Yui isn't around anywhere, and when she finds her still missing hours later, Miaka begins to worry about what has happened. When Miaka came back to her world, could Yui have been sucked into the "Universe of the Four Gods" in her place? With her worries about Yui, and her realization that she misses the new friends she made in the other world, Miaka decides to once again travel into the book. But when she gets back, she finds out that no one knows where Yui is at, and that her friend might actually be the Priestess of Seiryu ... which would make her Miaka's enemy! When I watched the first volume of *Fushigi Yûgi*, while I found it to be an interesting series, I though it was rough in some spots both in story progression and animation quality. However, I'm happy to see that as the series progresses, those problems have been worked out and *FY* keeps getting better and better. Even from the beginning, one of the things that first impressed me is the fact that Miaka isn't your typical anime heroine. She's cute, she's young, yet she's often brave enough to stand up for herself. It's nice to see a female character like her who isn't always the damsel in distress, and is a good example of the difference between shoujo titles and your more "male" titles. The story is a bit compressed from the manga version, but it's still fleshed out nicely and never feels too rushed (and the anime isn't as "flowery" as the manga was, for any of you who didn't like the manga's art style). The dub is also very good, and I give total props to Pioneer for using anime terminology in their dubs (in *FY* Miaka says "Yui-chan," and I've heard *Battle Athletes* use "manga"). The more I see of *Fushigi Yûgi*, the more I'm really starting to get hooked on it. It's got fun, drama, and beautiful shoujo style all wrapped up into one. **- shidoshi**



The New Adventures of

Kimba the White Lion

Family • TV (3 eps) • Pioneer • 3+
65 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

B

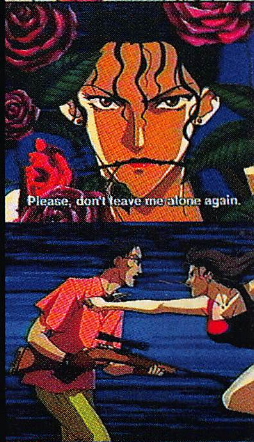
I first saw *Kimba The White Lion* back when I was still young, back before the word "anime" existed in America and things like *Shogun Warriors* and the such were just cool cartoons on television. I didn't watch it all that much, but do remember seeing it now and then and enjoying what I saw. Little did I know I was watching a classic Japanese anime series, *Jungle Emperor Leo*, which was the child of a man, Osamu Tezuka, who is regarded as the "grandfather" of modern Japanese anime and manga. Many years later, a newer version of Kimba came out, which is said to be the "true" version of the show that Tezuka wanted to create. Now, thanks to Pioneer, this wonderful series can be enjoyed by us English speaking fans. While the main gist of the story is the same, there are some elements that are different in this new telling. Panja, a large white lion, is the king of a jungle in Africa, and under his rule all of the animals get together and live happy and peaceful lives. This peace is shattered when he is killed by a poacher, and his wife Eliza is taken captive. However, Eliza has a son, and names his Kimba. Kimba is able to escape, and makes the long journey back to his father's jungle. But when he gets there he finds it being controlled by an evil lion, and Kimba must defend himself against those who don't want to see him become the king of the jungle, and help to bring the other animals living there together again. This is a wonderful show which is both fun and touching at the same time, and it's the perfect title for younger viewers out there. In fact, when looking for a gift for one, you should buy this instead of that movie *Blatant Kimba Ripoff*... er, I mean *The Lion King*. **- shidoshi**

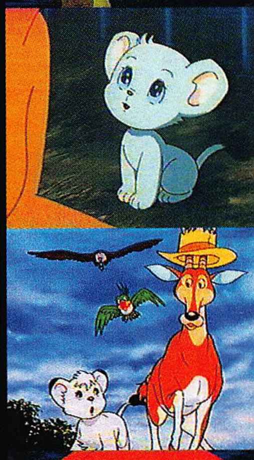
Chimera: Director's Cut

Hentai • OAV • Kitty • 18+
45 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

C-

Rei is a mysterious girl ... nicknamed "Chimera," she is a no-nonsense assassin that is said to be both an angel and a devil combined in one body. Even those closest to her don't truly know her, or the events in her past that have led her to become what she is now. She works as a bodyguard for a high-ranking member of a criminal organization, and he is not only impressed with her skills but enthralled by her beauty. But her real reasons for being so close to him aren't what he thinks, and she plans his death in order to try holding at bay some of the shadows from her past. While his death seems to resolve these issues, Rei finds her life quickly falling into a downward spiral as she get involved in far more serious situations than she can handle. What does fate have in store for Rei, and will she be able to escape the bloody life she's gotten herself into, or is she doomed to be just another casualty of a violent death? As *Chimera* came to a close, I sat there trying to figure out what I had just watched. This anime is utterly chaotic, as if the creators tried to cram a couple OAV's worth of storylines into one little 45 minute package. Just as one plot direction starts going, it swings in a completely different direction and starts on a new one. This not only makes the story a bit hard to follow, but it also never gives any characters or plotlines a chance to grow and develop. I also should mention that some of the situation in *Chimera* are absolutely not for everyone, and even hardcore hentai fans might find this title not their usual cup of tea. And remember, that little 18+ up there means just that - this one isn't for younger viewers. **- shidoshi**





Birdy the Mighty: Final Force

AF Best of the Issue!

Adventure • OAV • US Manga • 13+
60 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

A-

Birdy, the beautiful yet deadly Space Federation Officer. Watch Birdy hunt down the scum of the universe! Watch Birdy defeat them! Watch Birdy accidentally kill the innocent earthboy Tsutomu! Whoops. Birdy faces serious trouble due to her little slip up, and doesn't exactly like the idea that the SFO come up with: Birdy must now share her body with Tsutomu, transforming back and forth between him and herself depending on the situation. Of course, Tsutomu, while glad to be alive again, isn't exactly comfortable with the deal either. Such "boy and girl in same body" anime tales have certainly been told before, but with *Birdy the Mighty*, the show is fresh and creative enough to make you forget about that shorty after you begin watching. And, thankfully, *Birdy* doesn't reduce itself to using the myriad of "opposite sexes in the same body" jokes that many other titles have tossed our way (okay, well, MAYBE one or two, but that's it). Quality, quality, quality - that seems to be the theme that the production team was going for with *Birdy*. Animation quality and direction is extremely strong, and it just screams to be put onto DVD and done justice (which, sadly, isn't likely at this point). I found the dub to be pretty darn good (I especially liked the portrayal of Birdy), with but a few sore spots - the dub occasionally slips into the "James T. Kirk School of Acting," and Tsutomu's voice REALLY starts to grate on your nerves after a while. But it's hard not to fall in love with Birdy - she's cute without being sugary, tough without loosing her sense of tenderness and endearment. Equally charming are Tsutomu's family, as the scenes with them dealing with him are both really funny and slightly disturbing (let's just say his family is a bit sadistic). So have you gotten the idea yet that *Birdy* is a fabulous anime? Well, it is, so buy it, love it, and enjoy it. It's only big fault is that too many questions go unanswered in the end, and the only way to get more of the story is through the untranslated manga. **- shidoshi**



Fushigi Yugi · Chimera · Kimba the White Lion · Birdy the Mighty



AF DVD Connection

Heroic Legend of Arslan

Drama • OAV • US Manga • 14+
290 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

Anime **B** DVD **B**

The Anime

It's a tale we are all familiar with - the king of a country is conquered by another of evil intent, and the prince of the land goes into exile to plan the retaking of his home and revenge for what was done to his family. Yet even though we know the story, it's how it's told that counts, and *Heroic Legend of Arslan* certainly tells this story well (with a few turns in the plot that I really wasn't expecting). Unfortunately, this tale is sort of botched up by a huge diversity in quality from episode to episode. The first two are more movie-like, with nice art, great animation, and presented in widescreen. The next two episodes switch to full frame, and drop in both art and animation quality. Finally, we get the Age of Heroes episodes, which gets a boost for the better artwise and slightly raised animation. While it doesn't ruin the title, it's certainly disappointing to see a quality show suffer like this. Also, if you aren't much for the bishounen-type male characters (males who look more feminine and "pretty"), you might want to check out *Record of Lodoss War* instead of this one.

The DVD

Image quality wise, the DVD pretty much looks just as good as the original source material was. In other words, the Age of Heroes episodes look by far the best, the first two episodes are slightly lower in quality, and the third and fourth episodes are lowest. Still, the entire thing looks good all the way through, and there wasn't one scene where I was disappointed with what I was seeing. The only complaint that I had here was that the subtitles were somewhat hard to read at times (the text looked to go from solid white to slightly transparent every now and then), but this might be due to the way DVD subtitles work in the first place and I just haven't noticed as much before. *Arslan* proves that CPM isn't slacking off in their DVD production, and if you've always wanted to see *Arslan* or simply want to replace your VHS copies, this box set is definitely a wise purchase. **- shidoshi**

Tekken: The Movie

Action • OAV • ADV Films • 15+
60 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

Anime **B-** DVD **A-**

The Anime

I've never been much of a fan of anime based on fighting games because, frankly, most of them have horribly sucked. While I absolutely loathe the *Tekken* video game, I've got to give credit where it's due - while *Tekken:TM* isn't the best fighting game anime out there, it's certainly nothing to sneeze at. A bit shy on story and character development, yes, but still a strong attempt at proving that fighting game-based anime CAN actually connect well to the game and still be a good show at the same time. I liked the fact that the move centered around only a few members of the cast instead of trying to shove them all in and figure out what to do with them, but others found this to be a reason to not like the anime. [shrug] Just a matter of opinion, I guess.

The DVD

One of the major features on this DVD, and I know this might sound strange, is the fact that it's both dub and sub. Why is that such a big deal, when most DVD titles are like that? Well, since *Tekken* was released dub only on VHS, this is your only chance to see a sub version unless you already got a fansub copy from somewhere. If you've seen the VHS version, with it's impressive image quality, it translates into an even better DVD version, with a sharp, clear, colorful transfer with no objectional points of compression problems that I could see. And, as far as the menus, while they are rather minimalistic, they're very nicely done (with a Kazuya transformation one that's really cool). Throw in a bunch of trailers for other ADV titles, three language options (English, Japanese, and French), some still artwork and character profiles, and there you go. For their first DVD release, ADV has done a very good job, and I look forward to all of their future releases if they keep up this kind of quality. Oh, except, I don't like the cases that ADV is using. They're basically the typical keep-case, but the little tab on which the disc rests is hell to get the disc onto and off of. **- shidoshi**

Judge

Drama • OAV • US Manga • 15+
50 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

Anime **C+** DVD **B**

The Anime

I have to say that this is one of the strangest ideas for an anime that I've yet seen. The Judge of Darkness is a being who, by what means he gained this power is never explained, has the ability to put human souls on trials for any wrong acts that they have committed in their lives. So does that mean that he goes around playing God and deciding who lives and dies? Well, not totally. He actually takes certain souls to a sort of afterlife court room, where they are tried to see if they are guilty or innocent of the charges that the souls of the dead have brought up against them. There's even a shady defense lawyer who will defend anyone, no matter how evil, against the charges of the dead for the right price. Think of what might happen if the *X-Files* (or maybe *Millennium*) decided to do an episode of *Law and Order* in their typical style, and you'd have a good idea of what *Judge* is like. I always steered clear of this one, because it looked like an anime that would have me wishing for that hour of my life back. Yet, to be honest, it was of far higher quality than I was expecting. Still not the type of show that I have much feeling for, but it's certainly not terrible in any way, and I could see others getting into it.

The DVD

Pretty solid package all around here on this one. The image quality is very good, colorful and sharp all around, and the usual batch of extras are thrown on. One feature that the *Judge* DVD release includes that I always like to see is the use of the angle change option to provide both the original Japanese and new English ending credits. This is something that isn't used enough on anime DVD releases, but should be. The only disappointment that I had was that the Chapter Stops menu only had text, with no clip or even still image of the part of the anime that it linked to. It's a small gripe at best, but still a small gripe. So, while the anime didn't do much for me, the DVD is exactly what I'm looking for in most DVD releases (old title given new life with improved image quality), so if *Judge* is a favorite of yours, you might really want to consider getting this one. **- shidoshi**



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You know... the news.



AF News Service

• Catch Pokemon ... at the Movies!

Warner Brothers recently acquired the rights to release the ***Pokemon*** movie in North America. The movie, which was created by the same team responsible for the television series, was recently released in Japan where it's been making money like mad (but who wouldn't expect that). The US release is currently set for sometime this Summer. I'm not sure if I'll ever get used to this "anime in US theaters" thing, but hey, I'm not complaining.

• More Movie Details

Pokemon isn't the only anime series to get a movie version recently. Here are some details on other anime movie projects currently the hot topics in Japan:

Tenchi Muyo in Love! 2 : Distant Love

Release: May 1999 (Jpn) Tentative (US)

Like I need to say that I'm looking forward to this one. On a warm spring day, it seems that Ryoko and Aeka have finally had it with Tenchi and his wishy-washiness when it comes to telling them which girl he likes better. Tenchi, confronted with two girls demanding him to profess his love to them, chooses Option C, which entails making a mad run for it. Taking his leave to the hills around the Masaki home, he ends up getting lost (he probably just refused to stop and ask for directions), and during this time he looses his memory for some reason. Six months later, Ryoko and Aeka FINALLY decide to go out and look for him. The stumble upon Tenchi, looking older, having totally forgotten about his past, and living with a woman named Haruna. Of course, as always, a new girl in Tenchi's life is bound to cause havoc, and questions arise such as what has happened to Tenchi and who this new woman is. Coming from the same director of the original ***Tenchi Muyo in Love!*** movie (Hiroshi Negishi), this one certainly sounds interesting, and will hopefully be more of a "movie" like ***TMiL!*** than Midsummer's Eve (aka Daughter of Darkness here in the US).

Card Captor Sakura : The Movie

Release: Late Spring (Jpn) None (US)

Last issue we talked about an adorable little series in Japan called ***Card Captor Sakura*** (which I hope to cover a bit deeper in a future issue). This title has become quite popular, no doubt in part to it being the latest project from CLAMP, the phenomenal all-woman anime group responsible for such hits as ***Magic Knight Rayearth***, ***X/1999***, and ***Miyuki-chan in Wonderland***. In the movie, Sakura wins an all-expense paid trip to Hong Kong in a local contest, and she heads of on her trip with her brother Touya, friends Tomoyo and Yukito, and of course her constant companion Kero-chan. What awaits our dear Sakura in Hong Kong? Well, that's the point of the movie, of course! It'd be nice if a US company picked up the rights to at least this movie, or even better, the entire series.

You're Under Arrest! : The Movie

Release: Late Spring (Jpn) None (US)

I'm bitter about this one. Why? Well, no offense to ***YUA***, because it's a great little series, but why am I seeing this and not ***Ah! My Goddess : The Movie***?!? [curses] Anyhow, Natsumi and Miyuki return to the station after having gone through some extra training to find Tokyo going haywire. First the traffic signals are going nuts, then their chief is arrested and a bridge blows up! It then becomes a race against time to solve the mystery of what is going on as terrorists threaten to blow up all of the bridges in Tokyo and bring the city to it's knees! Sounds like a much more series version of this series than we've seen before.

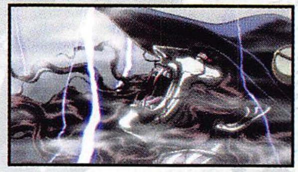


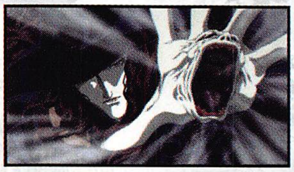
News Service Previews

Vampire Hunter D

The new version of ***Vampire Hunter D*** is a pretty big project, with companies such as Sony, Panasonic, Victor, and BMG getting in on the deal. The producers wanted to find a director that they knew could handle this very ambitious project, and they ended up with Yoshiaki Kawajiri, the renowned director of ***Wicked City*** and ***Ninja Scroll***. Another interesting point of it's creation is that, like a few other high-profile titles as of late, even from the beginning both the Japanese release and the eventual US release were both major consideration. Now that the market for Japanese animation is growing stronger and stronger, more anime titles are being created with both markets in mind, which is always good for us English-speaking fans.

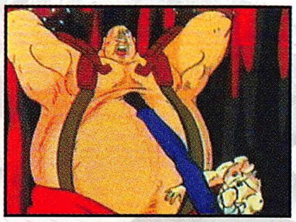


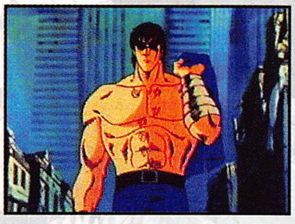




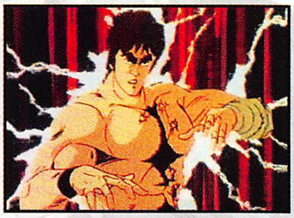


While Urban Vision is currently dealing with the title, they are not let sure to be the company releasing it here in the US. Don't fret, however, as an American release is guaranteed one way or another. As well, the producers want to be sure to point out that this is NOT a sequel, nor a rehash, of the original ***Vampire Hunter D*** title. This is more of a "title based on the same ideas but totally separate story" type of deal, and the creators are working hard to make sure that it's a title that will be able to stand on it's own. So, look at these nice little pics from the teaser that's been released on it, and start looking forward to the final release.









Fist of the North Star TV

In the future, the world is a devastated wasteland. Crime, pollution, death, evil, all things that are now the commonplace for this new world. The land is crying out for a hero, and that hero comes in the form of Kenshiro. Kenshiro is the only true master of the Hokuto Shinken, the martial arts technique which uses knowledge of the key points of the body to either heal or hurt. Can Kenshiro rise up and save the world from it's destruction?

The first volume of ***Fist of the North Star TV*** will be released on March 30th, and there will be twelve volumes released with three episodes on each. If you're a fan of ***Fist***, you might also want to check out the Manga Ent. Homepage, as they're gearing up a lot of exciting contests and promotions based around the series.

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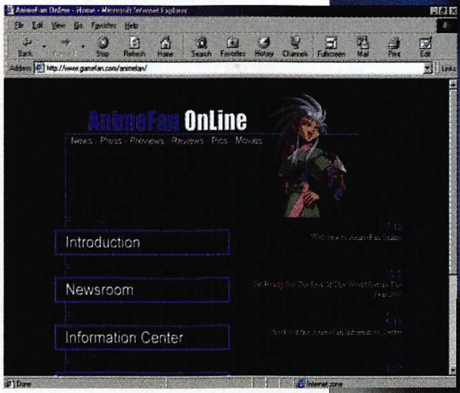
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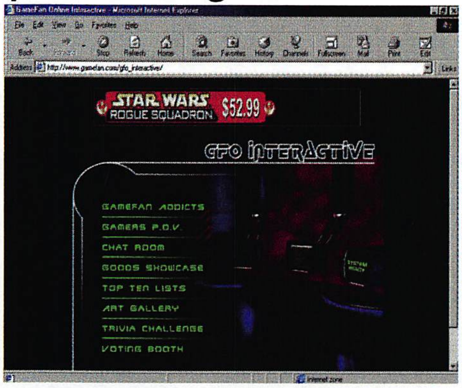
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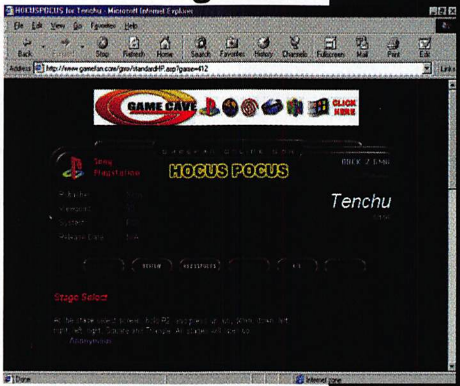
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Now, travel with thy controller in hand, to a place where cheaters prosper...

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GXTV!

FIRST PRIZE
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gXtv CONTEST



GXTV is the world's first video game TV with hyper-amplified sound and graphics. Enhance the thrill of gaming with adjustable speaker doors, stereo surround sound and a 15-watt sub woofer. Plus, the intense screen graphics will make you feel like your head's right inside the game. GXTV is also a 181-channel, 13" stereo TV with two A/V inputs, stereo headphone jack, backlit remote control and tilt/swivel stand. So whatcha waitin' for? Send in those codes and maybe you can win one of these GXTVs for yourself!

Power Stone Power Collection Book

You'll notice an option at the Main menu screen called Power Stone Collection. There are exactly 15 pages when you first open up the book. In order to open up these pages, you must do the following:

Page 1: Extending Staff
(or as ECM calls it, "The Staff of Evil")
In order to get this weapon, finish the game once with any character on any difficulty. The Extending Staff is a very good weapon since it can hit opponents across the screen. The Extending Staff will appear randomly like all the other weapons.





Page 2: Gatling Machine Gun
To get this weapon, finish the game twice with any character on any difficulty. The Gatling Machine Gun, while impressive looking, isn't that great of a special weapon since it takes forever to turn it around. The Gatling Machine Gun will also appear randomly like all the other weapons.

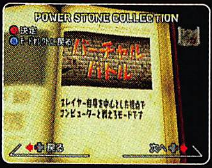
Page 3: Ray Gun
To get this weapon, finish the game three times with any character on any difficulty. The Ray Gun has limited range, but it can hit multiple times for some major damage. The Ray Gun will also appear randomly like all the other weapons.





Page 4: Shield
To get the shield device, finish the game four times with any character on any difficulty. The Shield is a great item that will prevent damage from ANY attack (even Power Fusion attacks) except throws. The Shield will also appear randomly like all the other weapons.

Page 5: Virtual Battle
Instead of the regular overview camera, the camera is placed right behind your character! To get this mode, beat the game on any difficulty with Kraken. Enter this mode by selecting it in the Power Stone Collection book. Note: This view mode is only for one player.





Page 6: Dual Battle
Using the same mode above, the screen is split in two, and now two players can challenge each other using the new camera format. To get this mode, beat the game on any difficulty using Valgas. Enter this mode by selecting it in the Power Stone Collection book.

Page 7: Fokker's Air Adventure
This option is a VMS Mini-Game you can download into your VMS. To get this Mini-Game, finish the game five times with any character on any difficulty. Fokker's Air Adventure is a simpler version of River Raid with a time limit where you try to collect as many coins as you can while avoiding the bombs, birds, and other assorted obstacles.





Page 8: Ayame's Shuriken
This option is another VMS Mini-Game you can download into your VMS. To get this Mini-Game, finish the game six times with any character on any difficulty. Ayame's Shuriken is a shooting game where you guide the crosshairs as you shoot down moving targets. The more targets you hit, the more coins you get.

Page 9: Gunrock's Gun Gun Slot
This option is the last VMS Mini-Game you can download into your VMS. To get this Mini-Game, finish the game seven times with any character on any difficulty. Gunrock's Gun Gun Slot is a slot machine where you can bet coins that you've earned and match up icons on the slot machine.





Page 10: Kraken Unlocked
This page will tell you that Kraken is now a playable character. To unlock Kraken, finish the game with all eight characters. At the character select screen, scroll left of Fokker or right of Ryoma to play the pirate boss Kraken.

Page 11: Valgas Unlocked
This page will tell you that Valgas is now a playable character. To unlock Valgas, finish the game with Kraken. At the character select screen, scroll left of Fokker or right of Ryoma to find Valgas.





Page 12: Final Valgas Unlocked
This page will tell you that the Final form of Valgas is now a playable character. However, you can only play Final Valgas in Versus mode, and only one player can select Final Valgas. Also, you can only play on the final stage.





Page 13: Concept Artbook
The Concept Artbook shows a lot of the character designs and stage drawings that before all the 3D work took place. To get the Concept Artbook, you first must download all the Power Stone VMS Mini-Games from your DC onto your VMS (see page 7, 8, and 9 above). Then, play any of three VMS Mini-Games and get 1000 or more coins. When you do, your VMS should tell you that the Concept Artbook has been unlocked. Load the VMS information when starting up Power Stone, and page 13 should be open.





Page 14: Movies
The Movies page will open as soon as you beat the game with any character on any difficulty setting. Every time you beat the game with a different character, that character's ending movie will be open.





Page 15: Music Mode
The Music Mode not only allows you to play every music track found in this game, but it has all the voice sounds for all the characters in the game. To unlock Music Mode, you first must download all the Power Stone VMS Mini-Games from your DC onto your VMS (see page 7, 8, and 9 above). Then, play any of three VMS Mini-Games and get 2000 or more coins. When you do, your VMS should tell you that the Music Mode in Power Stone has been opened. Load the VMS information when starting up Power Stone, and the last page in the Power Stone Collection Book should be open.

Sega Rally 2 60 Frames Per Second Mode

FINALLY, you can play *Sega Rally 2* without that annoying intermittent frame drop. Lock the frame rate to a steady 60 fps. At the main menu press Up, A, Down, Down, Left, Right, B, B, Down. A sound will confirm the code and you'll be flying at a constant 60 fps (with a little bit of detail loss)!

Last Blade 2 Move List (Arcade)

Legend:
f = forward
b = back
u = up
d = down
qcf = quarter circle forward
qcb = quarter circle back
hcf = half circle forward
hcb = half circle back
ch. (control direction) = hold joystick briefly in given direction

Note: Both Power and Speed modes can perform the Super Secret Slice, but only Power Mode can perform the Hidden Secret Slice.



Akari Ichijo
Demon Blast — qcf + A or B
Demon Bell Drop — hcb + A
Changing Troll — hcb + B
Transforming Troll — hcb + C
Star Orbit — ch. d, f + C
Troll Demon Launcher — f, d, df + A, B, or C
Talisman Curse — b, d, db + A, B or C
Super Secret Slice — qcb x2 + A+B
Hidden Secret Slice — hcb, f + B



Juzo Kanzaki
Bopper — qcf + A or B
Rock Crusher — ch. f, b, f + C
Rock Runner — qcf + C
Violent Sneeze — qcb + C
Piledriver Burial — hcb + A
Hammer Burial — hcb + B
Hammer Quake — f, d, df + A or B
Super Secret Slice — qcf x2 + A + B
Hidden Secret Slice — qcf x2 + B



Keichiro Washizuka
Fatal Flurry — ch. b, f + A or B
Follish Flurry — ch. d, u + A or B
Wolf Fang — ch. b, f + C
Glorious Death — qcb + A or B
Super Secret Slice — qcb x2 + A + B
Hidden Secret Slice — qcb x2 + B



Mukuro
Bald Eagle Swoop — qcb + A or B
Rotation Evisceration — f, d, df + A or B
Weasel's Bite — hcf + A or B
Land Licking Slide — f, b, f + C
Diving Scissor — Jump, qcb + A or B
Furious Mash — hcb + C
Super Secret Slice — qcf x2 + A + B
Hidden Secret Slice — qcf x2 + B



Hyo Amano
Piercing Sparrow — f, db, f + A or B
Badger Bash — Press A repeatedly
Windmill — qcb + A
Destiny — hcb + B
Loudmouth — hcb + C
Domino Toppler — df, df + C
Super Secret Slice — hcb x2 + A + B
Hidden Secret Slice — hcb x2 + B



Rekka Lee
Dragon Flame — hcb + A or B
Fan of Flames — ch. d, u + B
Dragon Hammer — qcb + C
Sky Dragon Hammer — Jump, qcb + C
No Shadow Kick — Jump, qcf + C
Mist Mauler — A + B, then A, B, C, or D
Super Secret Slice — qcb, hcf + A + B
Hidden Secret Slice — qcb, hcf + B



Zantetsu
Shadowless Fury — qcf + A
Spirit Drill — qcb + B
Necromancer's Shadow — f, b, f + C
Satan Drop — hcb + C
Cape of Shadows — b, d, db + A
Shadow's Blades — Jump, qcf + A or B
Shadow Crescent — f, d, df + C
Diving Kick — Jump, d + C
Super Secret Slice — f, hcf + A + B
Hidden Secret Slice — hcb x2 + B



Shingen Naoe
White Tiger Talon — qcb + A or B
White Tiger Ram — qcb + C
Kingfisher Crunch — hcf + A, B, or C
Diamond Smasher — hcb, f + C
Spirit Blast — f, d, df + A or B
Super Secret Slice — qcf x2 + A + B or hcb x2 + A + B
Hidden Secret Slice — hcb x2 + B



Shinnosuke Kagami
Swallow Wings of Flight — qcf + A
Flaming Talon of Retribution — qcf + B
Fiery Blast — f, d, df + A or B
Blazing Blast Bellow — hcb + A or B
Inner Fire Calling — hcb + C
Heavenly Phoenix Dive — Jump, d + C
Super Secret Slice — f, hcf + A + B or Jump, hcf + A+ B
Hidden Secret Slice — Jump, hcf + B



Kojiro Sanada
Flashing Flight — qcb + A
Black Hole Blade — qcb + B
Empty Death — f, d, df + A or B
Slashing Demise — qcf + A or B
Shunjin — qcb + C, then C
Super Secret Slice — qcb, hcf + A+ B
Hidden Secret Slice — qcb, hcf + B



Hibiki Takane
Distance Slash — qcf + A or B
Beckoning Slash — f, d, df + B
Piercing Moon Stab — f, d, df + C

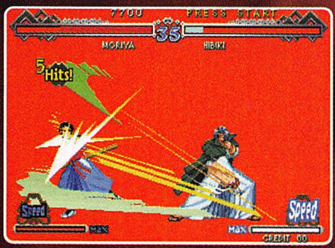
Melding Being Blade — hcf + C
Melding Counter — A+ B, then f + C, or b + C
Super Secret Slice — qcb, hcf + A + B
Hidden Secret Slice — f, hcf + B



Setsuna
Anonymity 1 — qcf + A or B
Anonymity 2 — f, d, df + A or B
Anonymity 3 — qcb + B
Anonymity 4 — f, d, df + C
Anonymity 5 — hcb + C
Super Secret Slice — qcf x2 + A + B
Hidden Secret Slice — hcb x2 + B



Kaede
Morning Star Squall — qcf + A or B
Morning Star Wind Fang — f, d, df + A or B
Morning Star Flash — qcb + A or B
Morning Star tail Wind — Jump, qcf + A or B
East Wind Whirl — qcb + C
Morning Star Storm — hcf + C
Super Secret Slice — qcb, hcb + A + B or qcf x2 + A + B
Hidden Secret Slice — qcf x2 + B

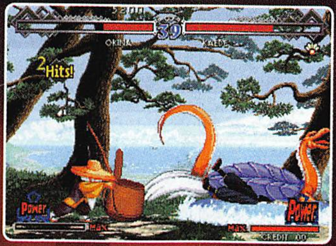


Moriya Minakata
Glancing Blade Haze — qcb + A, B, or C
Glancing Blade New Moon — f, d, df + A or B
Glancing Blade Moonlight — qcf + A x3 or qcf + B x4
Slash Blade Moonwalk — b, db, d + A B, or C
Super Secret Slice — f, hcf + A + B
Hidden Secret Slice — f, hcf + B



Yuki
Ice Blade — qcf + A or B
Frosty Flasher — f, d, df + A or B
Blizzard Blast — qcb + A or B

Mirror of Ice — hcf + C
Super Secret Slice — qcf x2 + A + B
Hidden Secret Slice — qcb, hcf + B



Genbu Okina
Turtle Thrust — qcf + A, B, or C
Turtle Tremor — hcb + A or B
Fisherman's Feint — f, d, df + A, B, or C
Turtle Somersault — hcb + C
Pacifist Pounce — A, B, or C
Super Secret Slice — f, hcf + A + B
Hidden Secret Slice — f, hcf + B

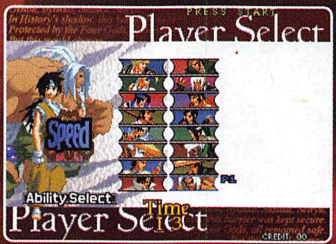
For a full, detailed, Last Blade 2 guide, check out our website at www.gamefan.com.

Last Blade 2 Move List (Arcade)
Extra Characters, EX Option

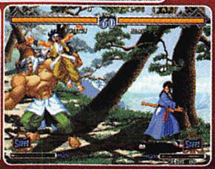




Normal Kaede
To pick Normal Kaede, at the Character Select screen highlight Kaede, and press the C button 9 times, press the B button once, and press the C button 4 times. You should hear Kaede's voice if you've input the code correctly. Normal Kaede has all the same moves as Kaede, without the lightning. Note that you have to input this code within 4 seconds, so do it quickly.







Naoe Kotetsu
While not a playable character, Naoe will make a brief appearance. To get Naoe, at the Character Select screen highlight Shigen, press the C button 5 times, B button 10 times, and the C button 2 times. You'll hear Nao's voice if you input the code correctly. You'll see Naoe by herself as if you'll be playing with her! Again, you'll have to enter this code very quickly (under 4 seconds).



Hagure Hitogata
Hagure Hitogata is the spirit that Akari conjures up. To play Hagure, highlight Akari, press the C button 8 times, the B button 9 times, and the C button 5 times. Hagure will take the form of the character you're playing against. Again, you'll have to enter this code very quickly (in under 4 seconds).





EX Mode
Finally, there's EX Mode, a cross between Speed Mode and Power Mode. Essentially, EX Mode allows for all the combo madness of Speed while enabling Super Cancels and the Secret Supers of Power Mode. You'll also get new colors for your character. To enable EX Mode, choose any character, and when you're selecting which mode to play with, highlight Speed and press the C button 6 times, highlight Power and press the B button 3 times, and highlight Speed again and press the C button 4 times. All this has to be done within 4 seconds.



SPEED OR POWER?





HOW 'BOUT EX MODE!

Marvel Vs. Capcom Code Overload!!!

There is no doubt that Marvel Vs. Capcom on the Dreamcast is an exceptional title. So why not spice up the gameplay with the following codes?



Hidden Characters

The following codes are to be entered at the Character Select Screen. Just make sure to save your game to your memory card, since entering all of the hidden character codes are a major pain.





Orange Hulk

Move the cursor to Chun Li, then move the cursor in the following directions: right, right, down, down, left, left, right, right, down, down, left, left, up, up, up, up, down, down, right, right, up, up, down, down, down, down, up, up, up, up, left, up.

If you input the code correctly, Orange Hulk will appear over Ryu's selection box. Orange Hulk has all the same special moves as regular hulk, but moves a lot faster. For the speed, Orange Hulk sacrifices Hulk's defensive ability.





Gold War Machine

Move the cursor to Zangief, then move the cursor in the following directions: left, left, down, down, right, right, down, down, left, left, up, up, up, up, right, right, left, left, down, down, down, down, right, right, up, up, left, left, down, down, right, right, up, up, up, up, up.

Gold War Machine will appear over Zangief's selection box. Gold War Machine doesn't have War Machine's Solar Cannon, but fires missiles instead. Gold War Machine is extremely slow, but cannot be knocked down or launched into the air.



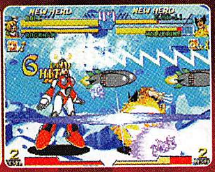


Red Venom

Move the cursor to Chun Li, then move the cursor in the following directions: right, down, down, down, down, left, up, up, up, up, right, right, down, down, left, left, down, down, right, right, up, up, up, up, left, left, up.

Red Venom will appear over Chun Li's selection box. Red Venom has better speed so his combos are easier to do and his special moves have been changes slightly. However, he takes more damage per hit than normal Venom.





Roll (Rockman's sister)

Move the cursor to Zangief, then move the cursor in the following directions: left, left, down, down, right, right, down, down, left, left, up, right, up, up, right, right.

Roll will appear next to Rockman's selection box. Roll plays pretty similar to Rockman, but has extremely limited range with her normal moves. However, cuz she's so small, it's also very hard to hit her.

Switch Starting Fighter

To switch your character before a match starts simply press and hold all three punches at the Versus screen until the match starts.

Select Helper Character

To select the desired Helper Character, hold the Start button with the following buttons after selecting your second character to select the Helper:

Unknown Soldier
Jab Punch





Lou
Strong Punch

Arthur
Jab and Strong Punch





Saki
Fierce Punch

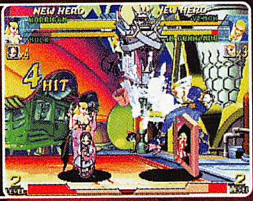
Ton-Poh
Jab and Fierce Punch





Devilot
Strong and Fierce Punch

Anita
All Punch Buttons





Pure & Fur
Short Kick

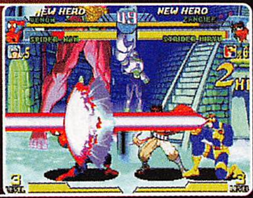
Michelle Heart
Jab Punch & Short Kick

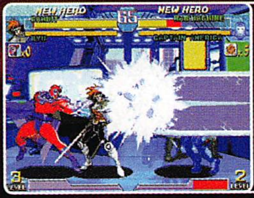




Thor
Short Kick & Strong Punch

Cyclops
Jab Punch, Short Kick & Strong Punch



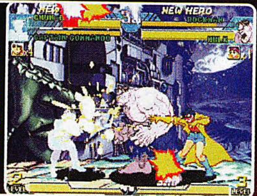


Magneto
Short Kick & Fierce Punch

Storm
Jab Punch, Short Kick & Fierce Punch



Jubilee
Short Kick, Strong Punch & Fierce Punch

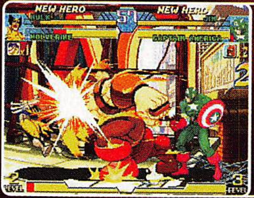




Rogue
Jab Punch, Short Kick, Strong Punch & Fierce Punch

Psylocke
Strong Punch





Juggernaut
Jab Punch & Forward Kick

Iceman
Strong Punch & Forward Kick





Colossus
Jab Punch, Strong Punch & Forward Kick

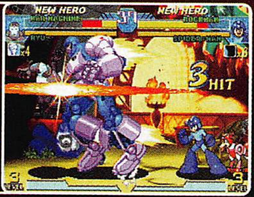
US Agent
Forward Kick & Fierce Punch





Shadow Charlie
Jab Punch, Forward Kick & Fierce Punch

Sentinel
Strong Punch, Forward Kick & Fierce Punch



Graveyard Code Special!!!

With *The Phantom Menace* coming soon, here are some "blast from the past" codes for the trilogy of *Star Wars* video games on the SNES.



SUPER STAR WARS
Debug Menu
At the title screen, press A, A, A, A, X, B, B, B, B, Y, X, X, X, X, A, Y, Y, Y, Y, and B. If you've done this right you'll hear a Jawa shriek. Now press L + R on Controller Two to access Debug Menu during gameplay.

Five Continues
Highlight "OPTIONS MENU" at the title screen and press X, B, B, A, Y. This code can only be done by itself.





Invincibility and Map Mode
With the Debug Menu on the screen (see first code), press and hold A, B, X, Y, Select and Start on controller 2, and press Start on controller 1. Now, release all the buttons, and you will start the game with your character's X and Y coordinates displayed on the screen. You will also be nearly invincible, with the ability to walk through walls and even drop through floors (by pressing down on the D-pad and B).





Light Saber
To start the game with a light saber, highlight "Options Menu" at the title screen and press Y, Y, X, X, A, B, X, and A.

Sound Test
At any time during the game hold A + B + X + Y, while pressing Start.



SUPER EMPIRE STRIKES BACK
Debug Menu
At title screen take controller 1 and press: A, B, Y, X, A, B, Y, X, A, B, A, B, Y, X, X, Y, A, B, Y, X. If you did it right you will hear





Darth Vader say, "Impressive." Now go into the game and press the L and R buttons simultaneously for the Debug Menu.







SUPER RETURN OF THE JEDI

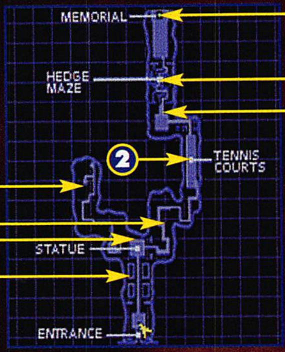
Debug Mode
At the title screen press A, A, B, B, X, X, Y, Y, A, B, X, Y, A, B, X, Y. If you input the code correctly, you'll hear an Ewok's voice. You can now play as any character you want on the side-scrolling levels. In addition, you can skip to the next level by pressing Start while holding B or enter a Debug Mode menu by holding L + R on Controller Two.



Infinite Thermal Detonators
Turn on the game. When Salacious Crumb (that laughing weasel-sized creature) drops down and starts laughing, quickly press B, X, B, X, B, X, B, B, B, Y. If entered correctly you will hear an Ewok shout. To use them, press X in any walking level to destroy all enemies on the screen.

Syphon Filter
Strategy Guide Part 2

Ready to get back in the saddle again? Then welcome back to 989's awesome espionage/action game. And stay alive for part 3, next month.



Washington Park
Objectives
1) Locate and Disarm 4 Viral Bombs
2) Rescue CBDC Hostages
3) Secure Terrorist Communications Array
4) Take Out Trigger Man Marcos
5) Reach Freedom Memorial

After taking out Mara and leaving her for the vultures, you'll be heading to Washington Park. This level is an excellent level to start practicing those sharpshooting skills with the L1 button. Head slowly northwest from the start point and take out the patrolling peon on the




ground and the sniper on top of the wall. The sniper will give you the Nightvision Sniper Rifle, which is an extremely useful weapon on this level. Continue north and you'll deal with a couple of guards here. There are four rectangular stone structures in the immediate area. The southwest one houses a box for a Shotgun, the southeast one holds a box for the Flak Jacket, the northeast is empty, and the




northwest holds one of the four Viral Bombs you'll need to tag. You should see a gray flashing icon in your radar screen whenever you're near a Viral Bomb. Once you tag it, a CBDC agent will disarm the bomb, and you'll need to provide covering fire for him. Tag the bomb and face north, so you'll get a clear shot of enemies as they try to approach. Once he's done, move north from here.

You'll get radioed from Lian about the CBDC hostage situation. Don't worry... you don't need to go there right away, so continue to find Viral Bombs. Right behind the Statue area, you find the second Viral Bomb. Tag it and this time, face south. Again, provide covering fire for your CBDC agent as a squad of enemies will appear. The shotgun or .45 is the best weapon here. Once done with the second, move west into the narrow passageway. This passageway will eventually open up to a squarish area, where you'll find 3 more enemies. I usually like




to take my time and pick them all off with head shots, but you can charge in with guns blazing as well. There's a Flak Jacket box found here, but you shouldn't need to use it right now. In fact, even if you're slightly damaged, try to save the Flak Jacket until you're really hurting. From here, keep heading in a northwest direction, and you'll find yourself in a large field. There are quite a number of enemies here, and all are armed with the Nightvision Sniper Rifle. All of them are mostly patrolling so you can easily sneak up on them and take them out with either a well-aimed shot with your 9mm or your Nightvision Sniper Rifle (remember, silence is golden). Of course, you can

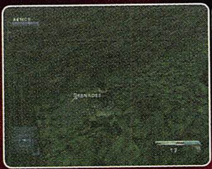



also go balls out and charge in with little damage to yourself. Head north where you should find two backhouses. The first backhouse and close in the center is where the third Viral Bomb is located. The second backhouse has a M-16 box if ya need it. In either case, tag the bomb and provide cover fire for the CBDC agent. This is a pretty hard one to provide cover for, as you'll need to continually sweep left to right and check your "six" for incoming enemies (use the .45 if you can). Once you're done here, make your way back to the Statue area and from there, head east.

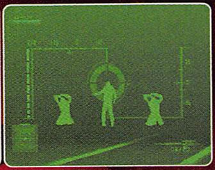
You should come across the last Viral Bomb pretty easily, and way before the Tennis Courts. Because of the open area here, it's going to be hard to provide cover fire for your CBDC agent. If you need to, "block" enemy fire that is directed at your




CBDC agent. There's a box of Grenades (not that you need them really) in the southeast corner of this area, and in the northwest corner right before the Tennis Courts you'll find a Flak Jacket box. Continue towards the Tennis Courts. Once again, you'll find yourself in a stone passageway, but this time enemies are on top of the walls. You can take them out, but it can be a pain, so I usually just ignore them. You should see a large bush wall in




front of you. In front of that, there's the fenced in Tennis Court. Take out the patrolling guard in the front of the Tennis Court and slowly make your way along the east side of the Tennis Court heading

north. When you see an open door, take out your Nightvision Sniper Rifle, and you'll see a hostage situation taking place. Simply shoot the terrorist in the head, and you'll rescue the hostages. Continue




northwest to the Communication Array area where there are four guards that are guarding the Comm. Array. Take them down, and climb up onto the stone structure to the top where the Comm. Array is found. From here, make your way north to the Hedge Maze.

Once at the Hedge Maze, take out any enemies here, and eventually Marcos will come out. He's wearing a Flak Jacket so it'll take a few shots to take him down




(Shotgun recommended here). He has pretty good aim, so move around a lot too. When he's near death, he'll run away, so chase after him. Once done, head north to Freedom Memorial. You won't encounter any guards till the very end, but when you do, two of them will



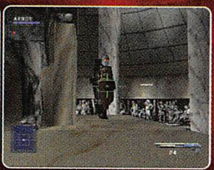

come out guns blazing, while the other two guard the door. All of them are wearing Flak Jackets so try for the head shot from afar. Once done, head on into Freedom Memorial.

Freedom Memorial: BOSS ENCOUNTER

Kick Anton Girdeux's fire-wielding ass (so I'm paraphrasing)

When you finally arrive at Freedom Memorial, you'll be treated to a short FMV sequence before you take on flame-throwing Anton Girdeux. First off, you're in an enclosed circular area, so there's no running here. Three item boxes are located against the walls holding an M-16, a Shotgun and a Flak Jacket. Obviously if you're running low on any of these, it's a good idea to pick them up, but if you do, watch your "Danger" meter, since Girdeux has amazing range with his flame-thrower.

Girdeux is wearing full body armor, a fact which is demonstrated if you try to wail at him with bullets. And since you can't use Grenades against him (using Grenades will set off the Viral Bombs in this area... how convenient) you're going to have to do some precise aiming. Girdeux's weak point is the Napalm Fuel Canister he's carrying on his back. I don't recommend running straight at him while trying to aim for his weak point. Hide

behind the large statue in the middle of the room, so that he doesn't have a clear shot at you. Girdeux will start walking around the statue but he'll remain on the statue's block. Anticipate where and when he's going to pop out, use your L1 button to aim, and as he pops out, aim for the pack on his back. When you see Girdeux in clear view, he will turn left and right for a moment before shooting you; use this moment to aim and fire. Don't

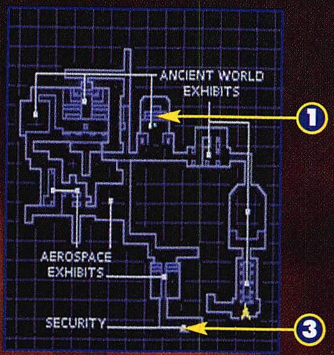



get greedy by trying to hit him with more than one shot. If you hit or miss, don't stay too long in Girdeux's sights. If he walks off the statue's block, use the above strategy but instead of the middle statue, use the pillars to block off Girdeux's view. Three direct shots to Girdeux's backpack with the Shotgun will take him out.

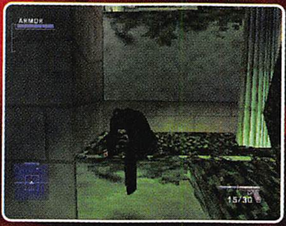
Expo Center Reception

Objectives
1) Shadow Phagan To Secret Meeting
2) Find Security Card-Keys
3) Capture Phagan Alive

Ah yes, Metal Gear Solid revisited. In the first part of this mission, you cannot be detected at all, so it's all about sneaking around and head shots. As soon as the mission starts, you'll see Phagan walk up the ramp towards the exhibit. You don't



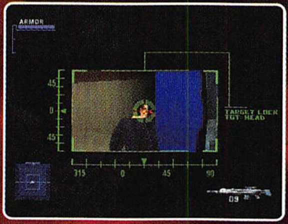
need to have him in view to follow him, so don't worry about losing Phagan. Instead of heading up the ramp, climb up the left side of the ramp and try to stay against the wall. Once you get to the top, you'll get a



clear head shot of the first guard, but wait till the second guard is walking down the ramp. Pick up their HK-5's that you can't use yet and continue slowly north until you come to a T-path. Turn left, and you should see a guard walking north. Follow



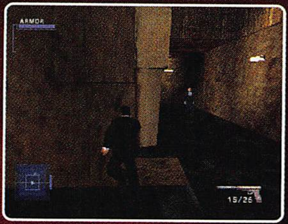
him and shoot him in the head before walking into the Stonehedge-like area. Use your Sniper Rifle and hit the guard (a head shot, of course) across the room guarding the next area. Watch his patrol path before taking a shot. Grab the ammo



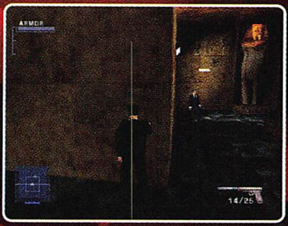
and head into the Ancient World Exhibits. Slowly walk in and you'll see a man patrolling back and forth. Shoot him in the head, and slowly walk right behind the Egyptian-like statues. A guard will start walking toward you so hide behind the



wall. Use your radar so you know where he's going. His patrol path ends near the entrance of the Ancient World Exhibits room so shoot him in the head once he stops there. Take all the HK-5 ammo and head slowly northwest. As you come around the corner, another guard will walk

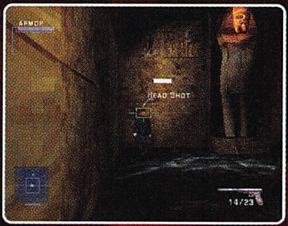


towards you. Hide behind the wall. He won't walk any farther, but he'll keep patrolling the entrance to the next area. This is a bit tricky here. While hiding behind the wall, you can still see him. When the guard turns and walks back, press and hold L1, then press and hold R2 to pop your head around the corner. You'll

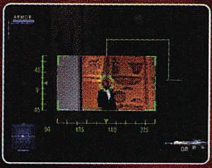
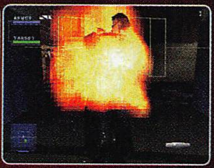


only have a few seconds for the head shot. Once he's down, grab his ammo and continue to the next area.

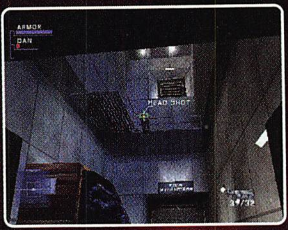
An FMV sequence will play and when you get back into the game, you'll need to take out the traitor. He's wearing a Flak Jacket and he's armed with a G-18 Pistol-Machinegun, so the easiest way to take him out is with a head shot from afar. Use the technique to take out the last guard before the FMV sequence (see above) to kill the traitor. Once you do, grab all his



stuff and head northwest. You don't have to sneak around anymore, but don't go ECM-gun-blazing crazy, either. Use the card-key you got from the traitor on the panel to open the fenced door. Before you do, there's a guard in the immediate north corner by the fenced door so take

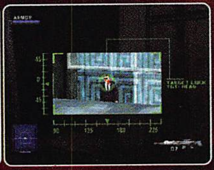



him out. Again, try using the "Around the Corner" technique to get an easy head shot, since you'll be using this technique frequently in later levels. Once he's down, open the door, grab his ammo, and kick open the door behind him.



You'll be greeted with gunfire as soon as you kick open the door. Two guards are high up in the north area of this room. Snipe them in the head (the highest one is wearing a Flak Jacket) and climb up to where they were by first climbing on the crate in center of the room against the left wall. Facing north, jump up to climb to the





catwalk. Climb up on the green box, and climb up into the north niche. Shoot open the lock to the door and enter the service tube. Turn left into the service tube and grab the HK-5 in the box at the end of this tube. Turn around and you'll see another locked door. Before shooting the lock to the door, take out the sniper from WAY



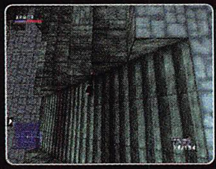


across the room. Shoot the lock off the door and slowly walk into the open area. DON'T GO DOWN THE RAMP, or you'll be asking for a difficult gunfight. Instead, walk slowly to either left or right, and take out the guards from afar with head shots. Slowly make your way down to the ground level, and take your time with





killing the guards (4 not including the sniper). Cut off their angles by ducking. When you get to the ground level, grab all the ammo and find the guard with the card-key (it should be the one wearing a Flak Jacket). Once you do, more guards will appear from the top. Take them out with head shots if you need to (none are





wearing Flak Jackets) and climb back up top where you shot open the locked door. There's a panel here that opens the door to the next level. SO, once you access the gate panel control, slide down the ramp. When you get to the bottom, run right, and take another right at the corner. The gate should closing by now, but you should have enough time to roll under it.

In this new area, there are only two guards here, but both are pretty hard to hit with a head shot. One guard is located high up to your left and the other is hiding behind the pillar to your right. The guard on the ground level is wearing a Flak Jacket so try your best to hit him afar with a head shot. Use the "Around the Corner" method to deal with the guard above you, and grab the cardkey from the dead guard



on the ground. There's Flak Jacket box here if you need it. Use the card-key to open up the panel. You'll enter an area with a rocket exhibit with three levels. There's a guard on your level and another one on the bottom level. Take them out

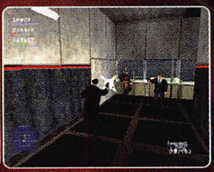




and slowly head toward the elevator panel but don't turn it on. Two more guards will appear, one on the top level, the second from the entrance you came through. Take out the guard on your level first, then take out the guy up top. Grab all the ammo in this rocket room, but don't go out of this rocket room yet.

Make sure you're on the second level of this rocket room. Call the lift and get in, and (using the L1 button) aim for the sparkling elevator panel right above you. This will bring you up to the third level. Run down the corridor of this area, and take out the single guard that you





encounter. When you get to the end of the room, you'll find yourself in the area where the sniper tried to shoot you with the long sliding ramp. He holds the card-key to the next area. Grab all his stuff and grab the Combat Shotgun (groovy...). More guards



will appear in the room with the sliding ramp. Ignore them, head back to the rocket room and try out the Combat Shotgun on the single guard you'll encounter. Head down to the first level of the rocket room, and kick open the door to the next level.

Entering this new room, stand by the door for a few seconds. A guard will come running up into your Combat Shotgun sights. Take him out and turn right where you'll see another guard trying to cleverly





hide in the shadows of a wall. Shoot him and grab the Flak Jacket (if you need it) and the G-18 ammo from the locker. Kick open the door to the Mars Landing room, where you'll be immediately greeted by gunfire from 3 goons. None of them are protected by Flak Jackets so just keep



moving and gun 'em down. Climb up to where the guards were standing and head south to the control panel that opens the gate to the Moon Exhibit room.

As you enter, you'll see a guard facing away from you, looking outside the window. Shoot him and keep heading east till you get to a box holding the K3G4. Take the K3G4 and face the window that shows the Moon Exhibit room. There will be a guard at the floor level, and a guard (wearing a Flak Jacket) on the scaffold above. Take them both out, and head



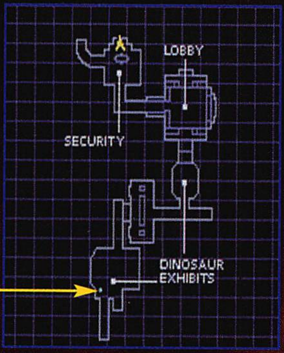


down to the Lunar Module in the middle room. As soon as you reach it, turn around and run back from where you came; two guards wearing Flak Jackets will rush out from the scaffold above. Try for head shots, or you can opt to use the K3G4, but try to conserve your ammo. Once you take those two guards out,





climb up on the Lunar Module and jump up to the scaffold. Turn left and head south... you'll encounter one more guard (again, wearing a Flak Jacket) before you reach the security room.



Expo Center Dinorama
Mission Objectives:
1) Find Security Card-Keys throughout the level
2) Capture both Aramov and Phagan alive.

Nope, no more sneaking around anymore. However, nearly all the guards are wearing Flak Jackets so either use the K3G4, or go for the head shots. As soon as the level starts, you'll be pinned down





by three guards firing away. Use the K3G4 since all four guards are wearing Flak Jackets. Grab the Flak Jacket in the locker as well as more K3G4 ammo. Head south and kick open the door. You'll be above the lobby, and the only way to





go is down. Head either left or right on the catwalk, and when you see a scaffold above you, jump up and grab it. Hand-over-hand it till you get to the center of the glass window. Now, drop and you'll be in the lobby.

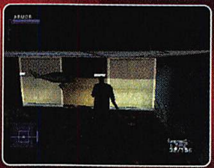
As soon as you land in the lobby, take out the gunner across from you (a head shot is preferred). Drop down and head south, but don't kick open the doors yet. Four gunners from high up top will try to gun you down. You have to kill the gunner on the lowest level to you (he's directly north from the doors to the Dinosaur Exhibit) since he has the card-key to the next level. So take him out, and kill all the rest of the snipers above (who, for once, aren't wearing Flak Jackets). Now, go to where the lowest level gunner was, and grab the card-key and other items. Now, head to the Dinosaur Exhibit. Once you get into the Dinosaur Exhibit, walk into





the center of the room. Two guards will come out, but don't try to gun them down. A third gunner will come up from behind you armed with a Combat Shotgun. So, when you reach the center of the Dinosaur room, turn around and look for that third gunman on your radar. When he appears, run back out into the lobby. All three gunmen are wearing Flak Jackets so go for head shots or use the K3G4. Now, head south and activate the control panel. Head west to the open gate. As soon as you enter the new





room, two guards will appear behind you, trying to gun you down behind the gate. Ignore them for now, as another guard will appear in this room. Equip the K3G4 and gun him down quickly. Stay on the north corner of this room. Now, there's a guard across the windows on the west side. Give him a nice shot to the head, THEN finish off those annoying guards behind you. Climb across to the west side of this area, and head south.

You'll enter a room with a large Brontosaurus exhibit. You'll hear a conversation between Aramov and Phagan. You have about 10 seconds to either taser Aramov or shoot her gun. Once you do,



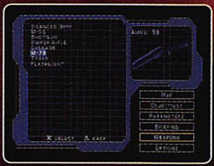


quickly climb onto the tail of the Brontosaurus, and run up till you can jump up to the scaffold above. Try to do this as quickly as you can, as 2 more guards will enter the run and gun you down as you hang from the scaffold, shimmy right to the platform where Aramov and Phagan were "talking."

Stay tuned for Part 3!

Syphon Filter
Codes!

Super Weapons
Alrighty! Finally a code that gives you unlimited ammo and all weapons that are accessible for the level you're playing on. To enable the Super Weapons code,





pause the game and highlight the "Weapons" option on the Pause Screen menu. Now simultaneously press and hold right + L2 + R2 + Circle + Square + X, and hit the "X" button just a bit later than the rest of the buttons.

Movie Mode
You have to be on the first level in order for this to work. Head to the Capitol Theater building (it's in the northernmost area on the map). Go to the front doors of the theater, and press Start. Highlight "Maps" and press and hold right + L2 + R1 + X. When inputting these commands, hit





the X button a little later than the rest. You should hear Gabe go, "Got it!" if you input the code correctly. Now, you'll be inside the Movie Theater! Head past the concession counter and into the drapes. You'll be able to see FMV sequences as far as you've completed the game. Note, if you try this code away from the theater door, you'll get a rather evil sounding laugh.

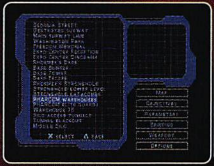


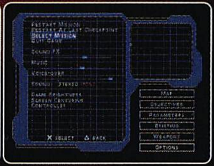
Hard Difficulty
As if this game wasn't hard enough! To make the game harder, highlight New Game on the title screen. Now press left + L1 + R2 + Select + Square + Circle + X. When inputting these commands, hit the X button a little later than the rest. You should hear Gabe say "Dammit!" if you input the code correctly. Now, you'll start a new game without Lian to give you details and the enemies have MUCH better aim. Good luck!

Silenced 9mm power-up:
Pause game play, highlight the "Silenced 9mm" selection under the "Weapons" option, then press Left + L1 + R2 + Select + Square + X. Gabe will say, "Understood!" to confirm correct code entry.

Weaker opponents:
Pause game play, highlight the "Map" option, then press Right + L2 + R1 + X. A laugh will confirm correct code entry.

Level Select
Now you can also select any level via this code. During gameplay, pause the game and go into the Options menu. Highlight "Select Mission," then press and hold left + L1 + R1 + Select + Square + X.





QUARTER CRUNCHERS



ASI '99 (short for Amusement Showcase International 1999) was held once again in the city of bright lights, big money, and washed-up celebrities. Yes, Las Vegas was the place, and ECM and your one-and-only dango were there, amidst the many arcade wonders and various redemption manure. So, here's a roundup of what we saw at the show and what you faithful arcade goers should look forward to seeing in the coming months.









Konami

Konami had its newest gun game entitled *Evil Night* on multiple cabinets. With graphics that tried to look like *House of the Dead,* but not quite making it, this gun game was rather unspectacular. The main attraction was the shotgun, complete with pump-action reload during gameplay. And while the shotgun was a pretty swell idea, along with the 3-player mode, *EN* still needs help visually. Along with *Evil Night,* Konami displayed *NBA Play-By-Play,* which is best described as a better looking, arcade-like *NBA Shoot Out.* Five-on-five, full-court ballin' with excellent commentary (hence the name), this game had one flaw... it was too arcadey. When Rick Smits of the Pacers starts performing double-pump slam dunks, you know realism has left the building.

Complete with revolving circular stage and two dancing models <smirk>, Konami had four music games available, in addition to their standard arcade lineup. A combination of Simon Says and those 7th grade PE square-dances that you were required to learn, *Dance Dance Revolution* has no joystick controls. Instead, you have a floor panel with two sets of directional buttons. That's right... you dance to the commands onscreen. The only reason I tried this game was due to the constant arm-dragging of a certain blond model. The game is essentially *Beatmania* sans buttons, and you know how much I detest *Beatmania.* Next, we have *Guitar Freak.* In the tradition of *Beatmania, Guitar Freak* has an actual 'guitar' on which you play riffs and melodies according to the on-screen instructions. Once in a while, you perform a solo, giving you the chance to show off your best Hendrix impression. While I'm kind of embarrassed to admit it, *Guitar Freak* was pretty fun... for a free game. To round up Konami's musical lineup, they had *Beatmania Complete Mix,* which was more of the same, and *Pop 'N Music,* which is currently available on Dreamcast (replete with wacky controller).







Capcom

I'm sure you're all on the edge of your seat, waiting for the latest word on *Strider 2* and *Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike* right? Well, guess what? THEY WEREN'T THERE! That's right, the no-show of *Strider 2* at ASI was a HUGE disappointment for ECM, who says it's my fault that it wasn't there... go figure. But hey, Capcom didn't leave us empty-handed; they basically pulled the same thing as they did last year. Ya' see, at ASI '98, Capcom had 12 *Marvel vs Capcom* machines. This year, they had 12 *Power Stone* machines; and while still fun, I'd already played the crap out of the DC version. So, I wasn't hanging around Capcom's area for too long... but they did have nice fuzzy balls to hand out (ECM's Note: and really cool Power Stones... all right, so they were really painted rocks, <grumble>).







Namco

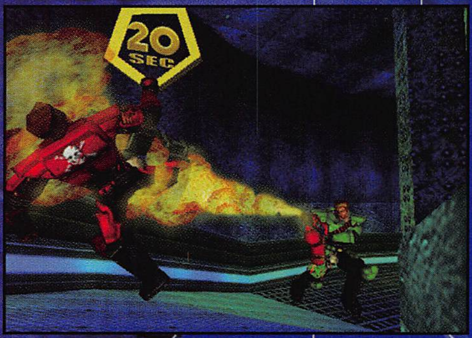
Namco has never disappointed me when it came to their arcade lineup... until now. There was barely anything worth mentioning at *Namco*. *GP500* was the newest game there, and if this game is running on their new System-23 hardware, it's not as impressive as I thought it would be. Don't get me wrong... the game looked nice, and the sense of realism was great... but the game lacked the pizzazz and excitement that I expected from an arcade title.

Other than that, Namco had a *Soul Calibur* machine, four *Point Blank 2* machines, and their new fishing game, *Angler King*. Deep-sea fishing is the game, and sharks and swordfish are your game. *Angler King* plays much like Sega's *Get Bass Fishing*, but the resistance when you first set the hook in will dislocate your shoulder. Unfortunately, *Angler King* wasn't quite as good as *Get Bass Fishing* because it seemed too easy to catch a lot of the "prized" species of ocean fish.







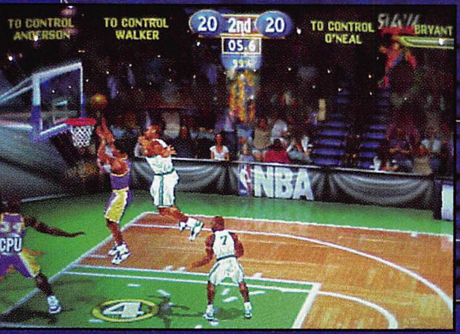


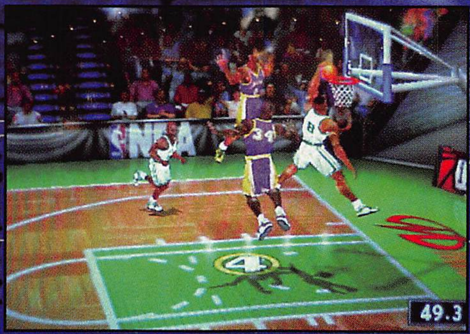
Midway/Atari Games

In the middle of the showroom floor, Midway/Atari Games had a nice combination of multi-linked deluxe arcade games and attractive blonde models which, as you know, are always a good combination if you want to grab the attention of the press (hint, hint).

Hydro Thunder was Midway's main attraction and there's a good reason why. The combination of blistering speed and a rumbling seat made this raceboat game a crowd favorite. The game itself is pretty fun, but the gameplay reminds me too much of *SF Rush*, of which I'm not a fan. Still, *Hydro Thunder* is a great rush the first couple of times you play. *NBA Showtime: NBA on NBC* was another crowd-pleaser in the Midway area. Gameplay-wise, this game is *NBA Jam* revisited with nice visuals and fantastic player animation... but it's still *NBA JAM*.

Atari Games had two games to speak of. *Road Burners* is a motorcycle racer which utilizes the highly overused *SF Rush/California Speed* engine. In other words, this game is *California Speed* with cycles... hit that 'snooze' alarm, people. The second game was the final version of *WAR: Final Assault*, which I had played about six months ago. Essentially, this game is *Quake 2*, but with some interesting weapons, as well as the ability to man turrets. The game uses a joystick for aiming (in place of a mouse or trackball) which works quite well. Linkable with three other players, *WAR: Final Assault* is not always a deathmatch game; you can opt to play as teammates and venture out on mission-based quests. But of course, everyone was busy blowing the crap out of each other since that's always so much more gratifying.



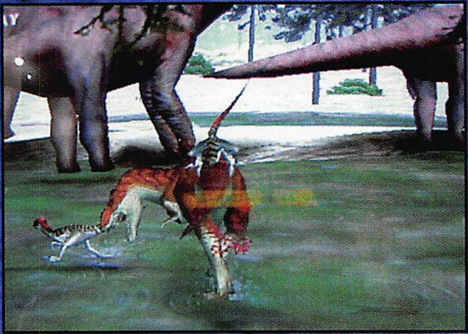




Interactive Light

Known more for their pseudo-"batting and soccer" virtual games in the arcades (which is only a step above redemption games on the arcade evolutionary ladder), *Interactive Light* had the biggest surprise of the show with *Savage Quest*. This game puts you in the role of a Tyrannosaurus Rex in prehistoric times, killing off other dinosaurs, and eating anything and everything that moves. Developed by Angel Studios, this game featured some awesome photo-realistic visuals and excellent animation for the dinosaurs. There's phenomenal detail on not just the dinosaurs, but the backgrounds as well. The awesome sound effects leave your stomach growling every time you digest a hapless human. While the gameplay might be a bit simplistic (even a bit childish), it's refreshingly different from a standard arcade game. The version we played wasn't quite finished, but this game looks ready to devour quarters already.



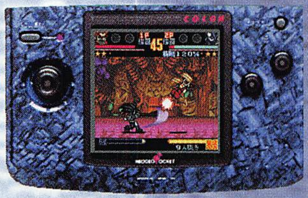




SNK

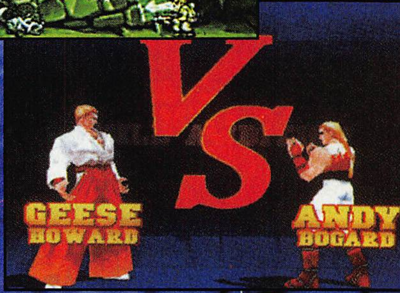
Forever the arcade standard, *SNK* had a great mix of games, which were far from the disappointing displays of other arcade companies. First off, *Fatal Fury: Wild Ambition* was on display, and it seems that *SNK*, while far from being masters of 3D, are getting better. *Fatal Fury: Wild Ambition* plays a bit slow, but the fighting in the game reminds me of *Fatal Fury Special*... which means it's good.

As far as Neo Geo goes, *Metal Slug X* was present and, man, did this gather a following (including ECM and I). While not too far removed from *Metal Slug 2, Metal Slug X* adds new weapons, enemies, and levels. In essence, this game is an upgrade from *Metal Slug 2* — think *Metal Slug 2 Turbo*... in fact, I WANT MORE! *Irritating Maze* was also present, which is essentially *Irritating Stick*, which is a maze game where you guide a stick through a maze. Touch any of the sides and you lose a credit (like the board game *Operation*), as the *Irritating Maze* machine fires out a blast of cool air in your face... In two words — very irritating.



We did get our hands (grubby for ECM) on the Neo Geo Pocket Color (available in Japan March 18th) and man, it looks SWEET! And I have reason to believe that a certain plumber might be sweating when the NG Pocket comes stateside.











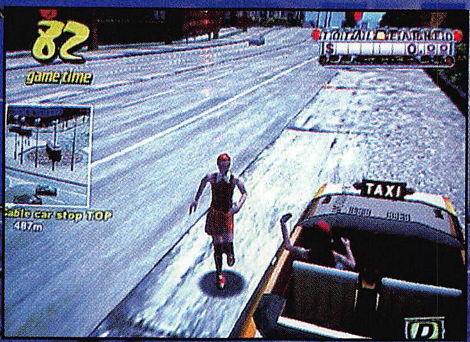


Sega

Of course, we couldn't leave out last year's ASI showstopper. There is no doubt that Sega does arcade games better than anyone else. Sega's floor had a large number of *Daytona 2* machines as well as deluxe versions of *House of the Dead 2*. Also, Sega had a videotape demo of *Dead Or Alive 2* which ECM and I watched over and over and over again.

Two machines of *The Ocean Hunter*, Sega's newest Model 3 Step 2 arcade game, sat side by side. This underwater gun game looks great... but it didn't play that way. Hunting down non-threatening underwater creatures isn't something I would pay to play. Then we have the Model 3 *L.A.* 'shake my wrists into oblivion' *Machineguns*, which is freakin' awesome. The sequel to *Gunblade N.Y., L.A. Machineguns* doesn't really add anything new... other than eye-popping graphics and the vibration pad which you stand on. With four levels of bullet-ridden action, enemies that actually try







to dodge your shots, and those gigantic mech-like bosses, all I need now are more toothpicks to keep me from blinking.

Next up comes *Magical Truck Adventure*, which is one of those "interactive" games. Two players can participate in this railcar race. Yes, you pump the handle up and down as you race on train tracks, while pressing the footpedal to make you jump. It's as much fun as working out with Gene Simmons [Eggo's note: Gene Simmons?!], and while he won't admit it, ECM likes this game. Then we have *Airline Pilots*, which was fast gathering a crowd at the show, and it's not hard to see why. With three screens that represent the windows of a cockpit, it's a spectacular looking Model 3 flight simulator... but it's still a flight simulator.

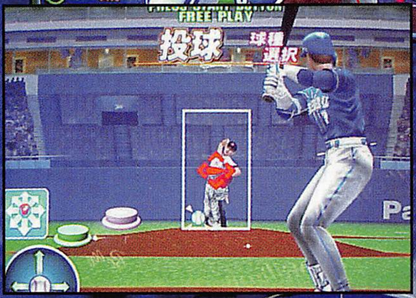
Of course, Sega's arcade lineup wouldn't be complete without NAOMI hardware. *Spike Out*, Sega's multi-cabinet fighting game, is best described as a great mix of *Ergheiz* and *Virtua Fighter 3*. While you can't manipulate objects (a la *Power Stone*), you can move tables, chairs, and other objects if you need to. Easily ECM's favorite, the fact that you fight other players on different cabinets is very appealing. *Dynamite Baseball* was Sega's NAOMI baseball game, and the game looked pretty nice. I'm not a baseball authority, but *Dynamite Baseball* looks better than any baseball game I've seen. *Zombie Revenge* was drawing more and more players as the day went on, and with horror combined with hard-hitting arcade action, I found myself hard-pressed to walk away. Imagine *Die Hard Arcade* with superior graphics, great controls, and longer levels, and you have *ZR* — sure to be a hit in arcades everywhere. The fact that this game runs on NAOMI hardware means a near-perfect DC port later... incredible! Last but not least, *Crazy Taxi* is the game that I had the most fun with at ASI '99. Take the role of one of four taxi drivers as you pick up customers and take them to their destination as fast as you can... even if it means ramming other cars, taking an alternate 'park' shortcut, or jumping off ramped trucks. Add to this the humorous comments of your passenger, and this was definitely my pick for game of the show.











The Wrap Up

As we left ASI '99, ECM and I agreed that, despite many disappointments, it was a great chance to see all the new DC titles that would be ported from arcade to console. And it's always great to see new companies putting out arcade titles that play great. Finally, we've included a list of our top five picks of the show, all of which should be heading to an arcade near you. Happy arcading! {POOF}...



Dangohead's Top Five

1. *Crazy Taxi* - Sega
2. *Savage Quest* – Interactive Light
3. *Zombie Revenge* - Sega
4. *LA Machineguns* - Sega
5. *Metal Slug X* - SNK

ECM's Top Five

1. *Spike Out* - Sega
2. *Metal Slug X* - SNK
3. *Zombie Revenge* - Sega
4. *Crazy Taxi* - Sega
5. *Dead or Alive 2 Movie* - Tecmo



THE POSTMEISTER!

Write to me or I'll run for president!!!
The Postmeister
6301 DeSoto Avenue Suite E
Woodland Hills, CA 91367

Hard-Core Import Playa

Dear Posty-San,

Imports play a big part in hard-core gaming! Without a shadow of a doubt GameFan Magazine is the zenith of the videogame magazine world. Even with all the "issues" that you've had, I didn't buy one other piece of T.P. that call themselves magazines. Please! Keep it together, I'm tired of wondering what's coming out next by reading the other pub. I know why you guys are my favorite (and millions of others) but I might not have enough space, so here goes my, uh, thing!

As I said at the beginning, imports play a bit part in hard-core gaming. As it does in the home console market. When researching, not one of the other mags have any coverage & reviews of import games. Could you guys make this permanent, if anything make this permanent. Put in an "import Hocus Pocus" please! Nobody even touches that! It'd be cool if you had strategies, the only way GameFan knows how: Good!

As usual, I have the following inquiries...

1. Is there an English text mode in *SFZ3*, so I don't have to worry about the American version?
2. With the import section hopefully coming soon, it'd be a more valuable book even more if you taught readers to read Japanese! What do you think?
3. Could you guys please, please go back to dissing those other pubs? They deserve it!

p.s. Eggo said that *Bust-a-Groove* would be huge over here! How does he feel that *B-a-G* didn't get one commerical on TV? And why do you think that is!

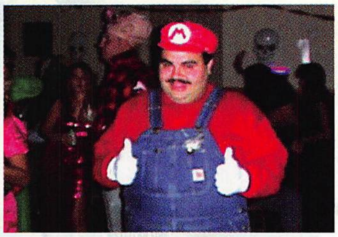
p.p.s. Waka, you da man! I was trying to figure out why Strike's song had a "dead spot"!

Yours Truly,
Andrae D
New York, NY

Hey Andrae!

Cool letter man, thanks for the props (hey, I might be crazy, but that don't mean I can't get down 'n funky!). Thank goodness you didn't read those other mags, you might've rot 'yer brain! Trust me, you don't want none of that self-inflicted lobotomy crap!

Now onto your Q's:



GameFans come in all shapes... and sizes! This rather rotund Mario clone is Anthony Parisi. Hey, where's Luigi?

1. Of course not! Why in the world would Capcom EVER put an English mode in their Japanese game when they know it's getting released here! But there might be an English mode in the Saturn version. We'll just have to wait 'n see!

2. Never. We thought about giving some lessons to teach Japanese, but thought better of it. First of all, Japanese ain't pig latin... it's a REAL language. Plus, for us English-speakin' people, it's very difficult, due to all the crazy Kanji and Kana. If we ever started to give lessons, it'd actually do more harm than good and the last thing we'd want is to get slapped with a lawsuit from some fruitcup sayin' we damaged him.

3. We would never, ever say nasty things about those 'other' magazines out there! We may be immature, childish and silly, but we're not slanderers! Hey, even we've got standards!

Oh yeah, Eggo's sad that the game didn't get no respect, but he's just glad it came out. Also, Waka sez you're crazy, but he loves you anyway!

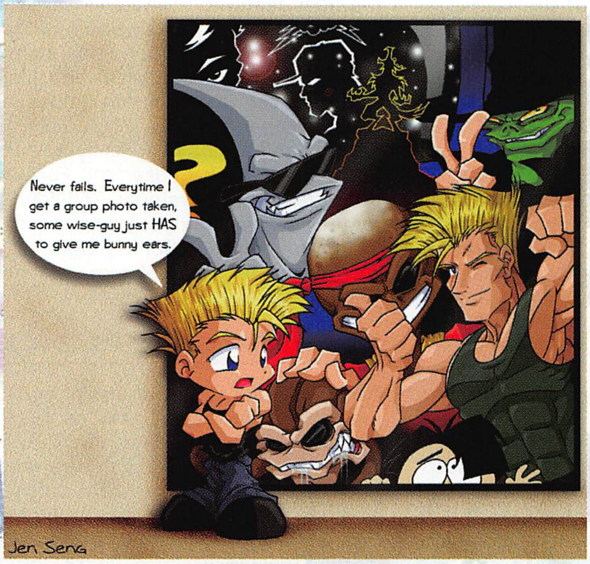
Xenogears Strikes Back

To GameFan

When *Final Fantasy VII* came out you guys were very quick to praise it, as was everyone else, heralding it as a life-changing experience and the greatest game ever. However, the game was disappointing, compared to its direct predecessor, which was without fault, and had a bad ending sequence, to which Nick Rox had to say (paraphrase) "Is 20 minutes of sepia-toned game graphics and mode 7 really better than 9 minutes of the most mindblowing CG ever?" Well, yes Nick, if it concludes the story well and has closure for all the characters. After this disappointment, Square blessed us with *Final Fantasy Tactics*, which is a masterpiece, and really is better than *FF7*. But now they've really gone and done it. Ladies and Gentlemen I present *Xenogears*, one of the most amazing stories ever, and the deepest most complex plot ever in an RPG. *Xenogears* is more an interactive epic than a game. For anyone who has ever played it through to its end, the plot of FF7 seems in comparison like something someone drunk scribbled on a piece of toilet paper. The game delves so far into each character's psyche, it examines their purpose, their feelings, their existance. The diologue and story are so provoking it is truly incredible. These are hard to say of much literature, much less a 'game'. The way in which the story is presented is unprecedented in design, particularly on the 2nd CD which is really "mind-blowing" — it is quite possibly the most amazing story you'll ever 'experience', except for Shinseiki Evangelion if you get to see the movie Death, Rebirth, and The End of Evangelion (truly amazing). This 'game' alone makes Squaresoft untouchable (much like *Zelda: TooT* does for Nintendo), it isn't really a game. Square have taken advantage of the game genre/medium, making it a true art form through which they provide some of the best stories ever. Nobody else in the world can make this. Square (of Japan, they're the geniuses), I applaud you, you know your stuff, and I thank you from my heart for *Xenogears*, the real greatest game ever, even if it ties with *FF6* and some Nintendo games, and maybe the only one you could call a life-changing experience, *FF7* definitely definitely isn't. Although it won't sell as well as *FF7*, masterpieces often go unheralded, but I worship it for its greatness, because many people don't have the patience to play through a game for 60 hours to finally understand the entire plot, many just can't understand it at all (how many people will pick up on the religious references of the game which are everywhere, such as Id's and Fei's final gear being Seraphim, six winged angels, or Merkava actually being the throne of God, and many more), and many people would prefer to play games like *Tekken 3* or

Time Crisis than something which requires you to think deeply, understand the strengths and weaknesses of mankind (much like Eva), and appreciate the beauty of it all, it is far superior to that game, and is one of my favourite stories ever, after *Evangelion* of course. *Xenogears* is not a game but a work of art, and a masterful one at that. It is one of the most amazing stories ever, and is one of a kind, we shall never see its likeness again (once again much like Eva). Thank you Squaresoft, you are incredible.

Robert Whiteman
Australia
Oshii@hotmail.com



What's this?! Jen Seng drawing Guile? How odd! *Guile?!*

Hey Bobbie,
Maybe you should've addressed this letter to, uh, Square themselves? It's not that I don't give a toot about reading, say, 10,000 freakin' letters a month (gonna... hyperventilate... <ack>) on why Xenogears *is better than* Final Fantasy VII. *Actually, I don't! Stop! Don't you realize that the reason a whole lotta people in reality-land didn't like* Xenogears *is because it was really long, really complicated, and just like your letter, it never actually made a point! It just kept going and going. Hey, I know a lotta you Square-heads out there loved it, a few of us here at GF loved it. It just got really boring, really fast. So no more letters on this one folks, or I'll really go postal on ya. And trust me, it won't be pretty...*

Inter-License Mud Wrestling?

Hi Posty,
Okay this is going to sound stupid, but I want to clear something up with my friends. If Lara from *Tomb Raider* and Claire from *Resident Evil 2* got into a fight who do you would win? I think Claire would kick Lara's ass so fast, but what do you guys at GameFan think? Thanks for your time!

Alma Shabop
Bellaboop, Australia

Well Alma,
Well, unfortunately, Lara and Claire belong to different companies (Eidos and Capcom) so I don't really think we'll ever know who would've won the fight. But, in keeping with the notion that we aren't dealing with reality, and assuming that these two lasses were real people, I'd have to give my vote to Claire. Unlike Lara, she doesn't have the face of a dog (woof... bark, bark!) and she's wearing so sexy short-shorts! Take a lookee at Lara... she's so outta proportion if she was real she couldn't even walk! Never trifle with gravity, me boy, it ain't always a pretty sight!

The Ultimate Best Game Ever!

Well what I'm writing in about is to find which is the truly the best game ever! *FF7* got straight 100's from you guys and two of them were 100+. I missed one of your guys issue which had *Zelda 64*'s rating in it. Sorry. So I checked through your website and seen that *Zelda 64* got a 100 too. I read the review and Super Teeter said it was the best game ever!! So which really is the greatest game ever? Personally I thought *FF7* was. So please clear this up and tell me and the world which really is the BEST GAME EVER. But whatever you pick we all know that *FF8* will be the undisputed king of the title.

Justin Heiligers
Slippy Slap, NY

Justin
Well, the whole idea behind saying that a game's the "best ever" is really kinda outdated. In that Zelda issue you missed (shame on you!) the long-awaited Zelda *for the N64 garnered a respectable 96, 99, and 100 (from Dangohead, Video Cowboy and Super Teeter respectively). Teeter thinks the two were a bit harsh, Dango just liked* Metal Gear *better and Cowboy... aah, Cowboy... we'll get back to ya on that. Anyhow, it ain't really very fair to say that Zelda or FF7 was the 'best ever', because everyone has their own opinion. The guys who reviewed FF7 loved it, ECM loves his* Final Fantasy Tactics, *Dango goes ga-ga over* Samurai 2. *Just remember that the same crew who reviewed FF7 wasn't the same crew that did Zelda. Dif'rent strokes fer dif'rent folks! Ha! I just made fun of Gary Coleman! I better watch it, or he might come after me! The only thing worse than a disgruntled ex-postal worker is a disgruntled ex-child actor!*
Oh, and about FF8 being the best game ever? Well, we'll just see about that — the game's got hairy Chocobos, and those things scare the beejeebies outta me!

Ask a Silly Question...

Dear Post-a-Rama
I heard a rumor... can it be true... a sequel to *Mario 64*? In the works as we speak? My spies tell me a sure-thing! Also how is the big N gonna do an add-on to *Zelda* without the 64DD? Thats just for starters... what's REALLY happening with NUON? Do you have any specs for that yet? OK... Too many questions, I know... Last one: I heard the PSX2 can do just about anything — can it core an apple? Many thanks for your wisdom on these matters Posty-san.

Sven Real
Norgaard, Norway

Svenny!
Actually, yes, there is indeedy a sequel planned for that swell game, Mario 64! *Only don't count on it being called* Mario 64-2. *Word is that it ain't gonna be on the Nintendo 64, but on Nintendo's brand spankin' new machine! Remember that the Big 'N' doesn't like to give their games numbers (like* Mario 2*) anymore, so it'll have some crazy name (like the SNES* Super Mario World*). Also, Nintendo is gonna release an add-on cart for the current Zelda game to 'complete' Mr. Miyamoto's vision (sorta like Sega did with* Sonic and Knuckles *way back when). And as for the PS2 being able to core an apple, you gotta look at like this: It might not be able to PHYSICALLY core an actual apple, but you can bet yer polygon-pushin' buttocks that it'll be able to render an apple, render an apple core and (surprise) render an apple core coring an apple! I don't know how that's gonna help games out, but it sure sounds cool!*

See you next month, all you crazy one-armed Posty fans!!



Price, Release Date, And More- Oh My!

The rumor mill is churnin' this month with release plans from a number of large US developers beginning to solidify. Interplay in particular seems to have taken quite strongly to the Dreamcast, with ports of *Baldur's Gate* (or perhaps its sequel) making the leap to DC Internet play. This is huge news as *BG* proved to be a huge hit with the PC gaming community. Add in *Asheron's Call* and the oft-rumored *Phantasy Star* sequel (when Sega, when?) and you've got an RPG powerhouse. Now if only they could convince Square and Enix to come on over... the water sure is nice.

In other PC developer news, Kalisto is hard at work on a new 3rd person action adventure currently running on Power VR2 (the 3d chipset for DC). The game was featured at the recent GDC and drew admiring stares and more than a few looks of envy.

Acclaim reportedly dumped production on its latest *NBA Jam* game destined for DC after getting an eyeful of Visual Concept's new NBA B-ball game. The game is looking so far beyond current sports games (along with their recently announced football title) that most developers are hard-pressed to come up with viable alternatives.

Also in the DC Rumor Mill, there are reports that Sega of America is tossing around two configurations for the official U.S. launch of the new power-system. One is the standard 'core-system' approach: a complete system, but no game. The second would be very similar to what Sega's done in the past: a system with three games on one CD (increasing the cost by about 50 bucks).

Last, but certainly not least, the Dreamcast's price point has been set at $199.99 and many, many stores are taking pre-orders for the rumored September 9th launch date for a paltry $10-$20. I don't know about you, but I'm there!

N64 Gets Resident Evil Zero

As reported in Other Stuff a few months back, it's finally official and it's definitely awesome. *Resident Evil* is headed to the N64 under the moniker *Resident Evil Zero*!

Yoshiki Okamoto, one of the designers for the original *Resident Evil* game, will be developing the title for Capcom with his new company, Flagship Games. *Resident Evil Zero* takes place before the original *RE* and revolves around Raccoon City before it's infected by the dreaded T-Virus (with full Expansion Pak support). Also rumored in the works is yet another *RE* title (it just keeps getting better and better!). But this one's just a plain port of *Resident Evil 2*.

First Glimpse of PS2 Board?



Several Japanese magazines have been showing what just might be the guts of Sony's new mega-monster console, the PlayStation 2 (termed the "PSY" by many sources). We couldn't be left behind, so here's a shot of the sucker as we know it. If this is the new PS2 (PSY) motherboard, then both the Graphics Synthesizer and Emotion Engine are onboard.

SNK vs. Capcom Confirmed!

Dreams do come true! Even though we reported earlier that the much-anticipated 'dream-game' was a hoax, it turns out that such a game is actually in the works! We must stress that while the pictures floating around the Net are completely bogus, an actual game is under development as you read this.

Developed primarily by SNK, the new 'cross-over' game (as it's lovingly referred to by fans) will first appear on SNK's new NeoGeo Pocket Color, then make a much-improved appearance in the arcades, courtesy of the powerful Naomi arcade board. This pretty much guarantees a perfect home version for the Dreamcast.

The game won't be a simple cross-up of the much loved *Street Fighter* cast and *King of Fighters* set, but will instead feature each company's most popular characters, much like what Capcom did with the ultra-popular *Marvel vs Capcom*. Bionic Commando versus Geese Howard? Terry Bogard versus MegaMan? Quite possibly, but only time will tell. SNK and Capcom have been bitter rivals in the arcade/2D fighting category for years, and they've been known to take punches at each other in their games. This probably started when SNK hired away several of Capcom's *Street Fighter* development staff to work on the *King of Fighters* series.

Nintendo to Launch New System Soon!

Nintendo U.S. supremo (and President) Howard Lincoln has told third party developers at a sales conference in Italy that specs for the successor to the N64 will be released before the end of the year. Art-X is developing the hardware. Retro Studios, as previously reported, will develop exclusively for the console. Word out of Japan is that the new hardware is even more powerful than the incredible PS2 (PSY) hardware. And perhaps more impressive, Nintendo is finally going to drop the cartridge format.

There were rumors toward the end of last week that a *Turok* title is in the works for the machine, tentatively dubbed the N2000, though that has yet to be confirmed by Acclaim. We can only imagine what the next *Mario* title will look like! Mama Mia!

Metroid Goes to N64?

Rumors around industry recently stated that a new *Metroid* title is indeed headed for consoles everywhere sometime in the not-so-distant future. However, after doing some digging, it appears that the game will not make its debut on N64, but on the N2000. Nintendo's R&D2 team is hard at work on the killer title that gamers have been clamoring for. Now about it being 2D...

Sequels Storm Dreamcast!

Dreams do come true! Amazingly enough it has come to our attention that a number of the titles featured in March's DC Wish List are indeed in the works. Some of the more notable titles: *Shinobi* (the continuing adventures of Joe Musashi and his trusty sword); *Ecco the Dolphin* (more aquatic action); *Legend of Oasis* (courtesy of Yuzo Koshiro and the boys at Ancient — in glorious 2D, no less); *Chakan the Forever Man* (from *Tiny Tank* developer AndNow — look for the exclusive first look next month!); and [drum roll please] Sonic Teams' *NiGHTs*! We needed to get ECM some air after this slew of info arrived at GF.

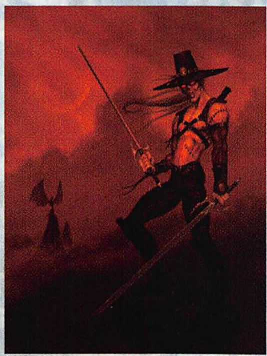
Sony of America Gets PSY Dev Kits

According to a source at one of Sony's own internal development studios they have taken delivery of a brand new PSY dev kit. Currently, a small army of programmers are working on the new hardware which "is not a sports game" according to our source. Rumors suggest it could be the next chapter in the *Twisted Metal* saga or the much-talked about sequel to the venerable *Warhawk* (which is seemingly destined to never show up on PSX).

Namco To Develop Tekken 4 on CD

Upon announcing the specs for its upcoming mega-console, Namco has recently stated that the game will be featured on a regular CD-ROM, **not** DVD. Why? Seems that if the PSY doesn't make its intended release date, the game can be quickly scaled down to 'fit' on the PSX.

Chakan Lives Again!



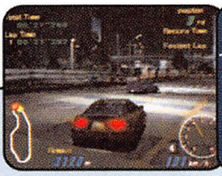
As a last minute bonus, here's a piece of conceptual art from the confirmed *Chakan* sequel now in the works from AndNow. The art was created by original *Chakan* pixel artist Steve Ross and should give you a good idea how hard-core *Chakan* has become — apparently he's taking tips from Marilyn Manson now...

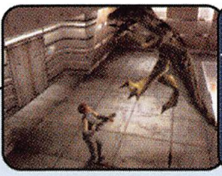
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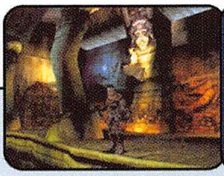
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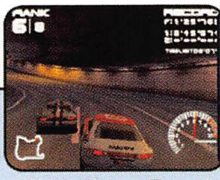
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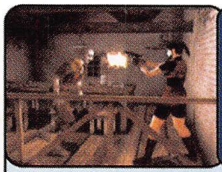
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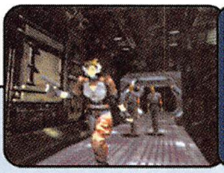
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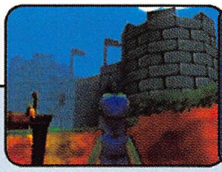
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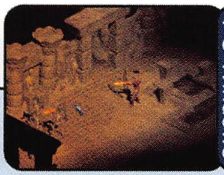

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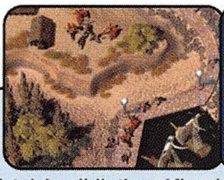

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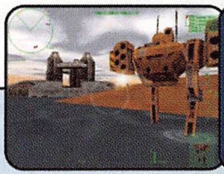
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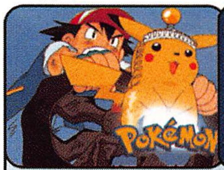
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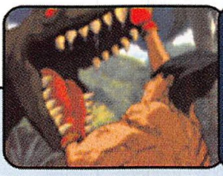
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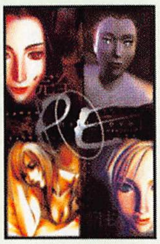


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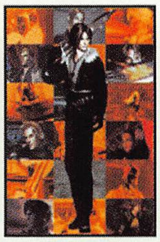

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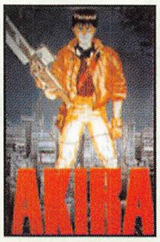
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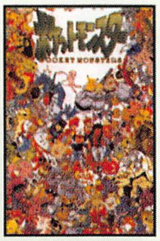

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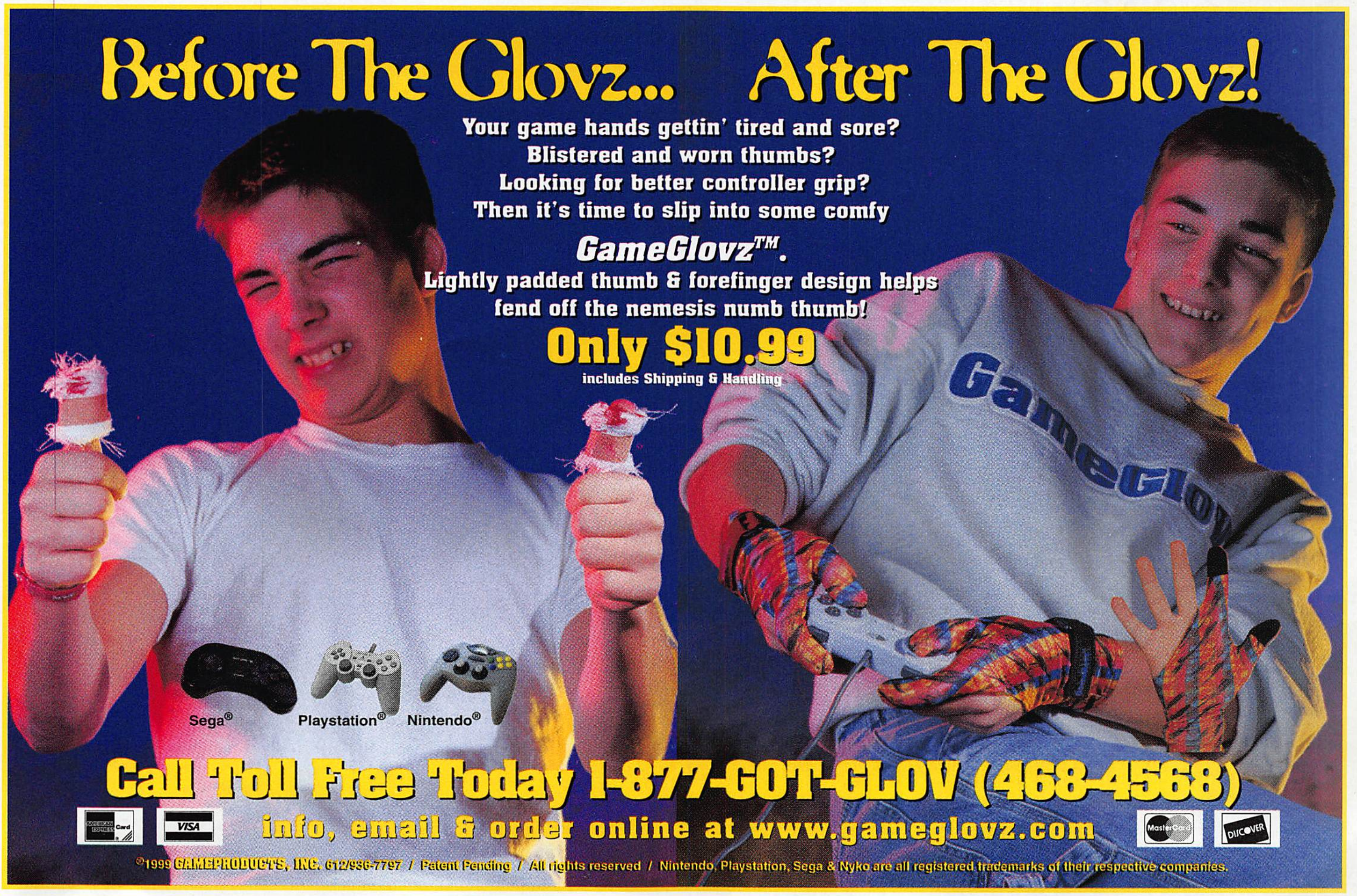

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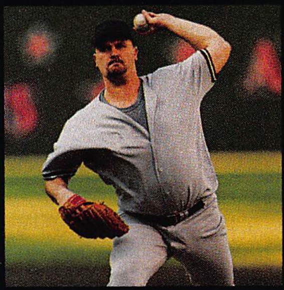
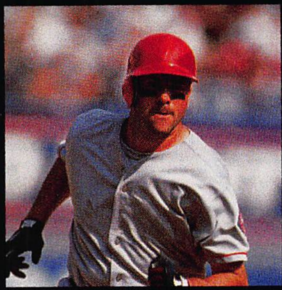


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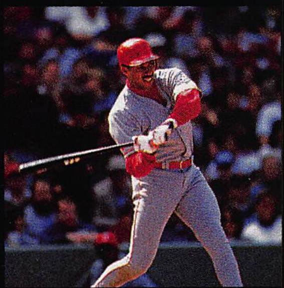
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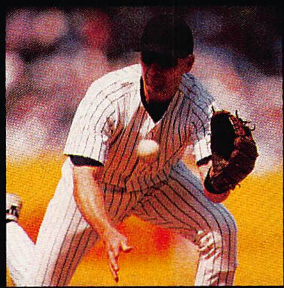



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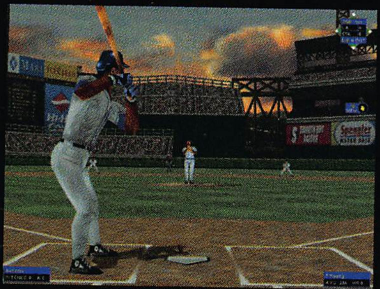
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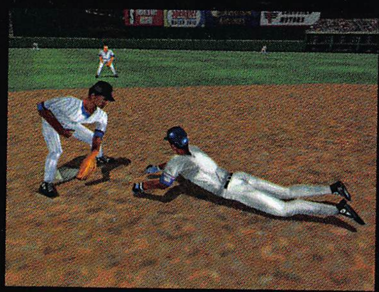
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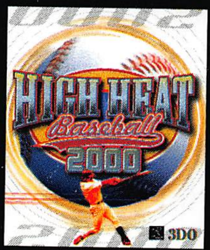
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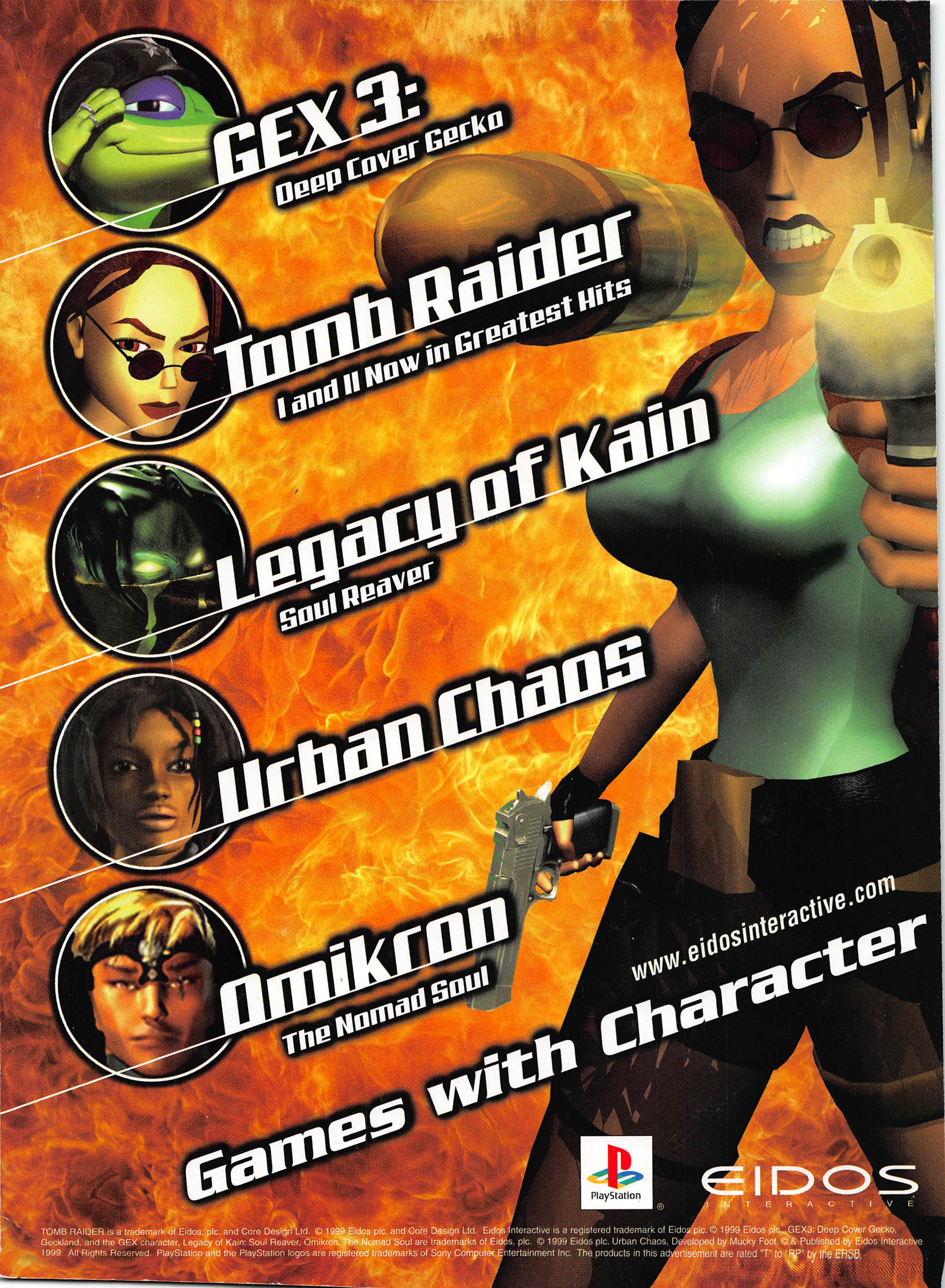
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